

WHOSE REGIONAL SECURITY?: IDENTITY/DIFFERENCE AND  
THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

by

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Sub-thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (International  
Relations) in the Department of International Relations,  
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February 1992

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## DECLARATION

This sub-thesis is my own work and all sources used have been acknowledged.

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## Introduction

'Regional security', as it has been discussed in relation to the South Pacific, is a notion which obscures more than it explains. The implication is that the South Pacific somehow constitutes a security community, but how this works in terms of a bounded 'region' and what security means to, in and/or for this region is unclear.

This is no doubt due in part to the ambiguous, contested nature of the security concept itself. But it is also due to an unexamined concept of region. Most commonly treated as a 'level' of analysis, its security is then seen either as its collective security against 'outsiders', or in terms of an internal security 'community'. What is not considered is the way in which it constructs an 'inside' and an 'outside'. Rather the 'region' of regional security is usually taken as a given.

In this paper I propose to recast the question of regional security by focusing on the practices of region-making themselves. Talk of 'region' already implies an 'identity'; looking at the South Pacific as something which has been *made* suggests an interest in examining how this has been done. My focus here is thus on the way in which identity-making processes have formed something which has come to be 'known' as the South Pacific. My argument is that the South Pacific 'region' - and consequently any notion of 'regional' security - is, in fact, the site of differing, and often contesting, discourses<sup>1</sup> of identity-making.

Identity-making is also boundary-making which establishes a distinction as well as a relationship between identity and difference. In this relationship lies the question of 'security'. Whatever may now be commonly thought of as the characteristics of security - its levels, dimensions, etc. - its beginnings lie in this need to establish a relation between identity and difference.<sup>2</sup> Looking at

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<sup>1</sup>The concept of discourse will be discussed below.

<sup>2</sup>The relationship between identity, difference and security is discussed in the next section.



'region' as an identity/security construction, rather than as a 'referent object'<sup>1</sup> for security, preserves the ambiguities latent in all such constructions, and allows speculation on the region/s we might see in re-focusing on region-making.

My aim is to clear the ground for such a consideration by asking 'what region are we talking about'. I will be suggesting that there is in fact not one region but many, that there are 'different regions for different occasions.'<sup>2</sup> I will thus be not only asking *why* the South Pacific as an identity/security construction, but looking at the ways in which it is "contested, temporal, and emergent."<sup>3</sup>

My approach here is to look at ways in which "representation and explanation - both by insiders and outsiders"<sup>4</sup> - have constructed the South Pacific. I follow a general discussion of identity, security, and boundary-making with sections on the beginnings of the South Pacific in discourses of history, culture and international order. These discourses suggest that region-making has been *integral* to other identity-making, thus problematising the notion of region as a *level* of identity/security. This then raises the question of how regional community is possible and out of what relations of identity and difference it has been constructed. My conclusion points out that for the question 'whose security'<sup>5</sup> to be addressed, it is necessary to consider the identity-making practices which construct that 'who.' 'Whose regional security' can only be addressed in terms of the making of that region.

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<sup>1</sup>The term is from Buzan (Buzan, Barry. *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*. 2d. ed. (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 15 and passim.

<sup>2</sup>This is a paraphrase from Greg Denning's "there are different histories for different occasions." (Denning, Greg. *History's Anthropology* (Lanham, Mass.: University Press of America, 1988), p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>Clifford, James. "Introduction: Partial Truths" In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) p. 19.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>On the question 'whose security?' as a way of rethinking security, see below.

### Identity, Difference and Security

'Identity' requires a correlative notion of 'difference.' Such difference, however, challenges the "integrity and certainty"<sup>1</sup> of identity.

"Identity is thus a slippery, insecure experience, dependent on its ability to define difference and vulnerable to the tendency of entities it would so define to counter, resist, overturn, or subvert definitions applied to them. Identity stands in a complex, political relation to the differences it seeks to fix."<sup>2</sup>

Identities are thus not only constructed and relational but they are also 'deferred'.<sup>3</sup>

'Security' is one way - in international relations it is the usual way - of framing the question of the relationship between identity and difference. Security is "defined" both by bounding out what is different, and by establishing terms of relationship to that 'Other'. Where a challenge to identity is seen as a threat, the 'Self' asserts itself by naming the 'Other' in terms which will reassure the Self - by 'demonizing' or at least 'fixing' the Other. However, "discourses of otherness are usually more about the regulation of the same as [sic] they are about distancing the different."<sup>4</sup>

Security, like identity, is thus always being worked out on the boundaries as these are being made in the construction of 'Self' and 'Other'. It is a product of both boundary-making processes and of relations across those

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<sup>1</sup>Connolly, William E. Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. ix.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>In the sense of Derrida's notion of 'différance', described as "a structuring principle that suggests definition rests not on the entity itself but in its positive and negative references to other texts. Meaning changes over time, and ultimately the attribution of meaning is put off, postponed, deferred, forever." (Rosenau, Pauline Marie. Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. xi.

<sup>4</sup>Dalby, Simon. Rethinking Security: Ambiguities in Policy and Theory (Canberra: Peace Research Centre, ANU, 1991), p. 16.



boundaries. In the context of an international system<sup>1</sup>, it is constructed in international relations. Or, to put it another way round, international relations is the process in which security is worked out between differently *bounding* identities.

In the historically constituted idea of state sovereignty there is a dualism between community within and 'mere' relations between states. In this context, Walker has noted that security policy "occurs on the boundary between claims about political community inside and the lack of community outside. Security policy is not just a matter of defence against external threat. It is also the site at which particular political communities become aware of the limits to their own claim to pursue universalizing standards of conduct."<sup>2</sup>

One of the great unanswered questions in discussions of 'regional security' is what does political community - and thus security community - mean in relation to 'region'; how applicable are the notions of community/sovereignty developed in terms of states and the state system? I would argue that much of what I have to say about the construction of 'region' - as site of identity-making processes - could also be said of states. The fact that states seem more 'natural' simply points to their success in establishing themselves as the most legitimate form of political community - or to put it another way, the most legitimate form of the political resolution of identity/difference.

As has oft been noted, states and the state system were constructed together; the notion of international anarchy and the sovereignty of states are opposite sides of the same coin. In this context states have something

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<sup>1</sup>I use the term 'international system' here in a commonsense way, without implying anything 'systemic'.

<sup>2</sup>Walker, R. B. J. Security, Sovereignty and the Challenge of World Politics (Canberra: Peace Research Center, ANU, 1990), p. 11.

powerful in common - their status as states - although this also provides the basis for competition - for wealth, power, and perhaps above all, for loyalty. With the notion of region the matter is more complicated. Regions do not exist in a system of regions. Therefore, this duality of commonality and competition does not exist.<sup>1</sup> 'Region' would thus seem to pose a different sort of resolution of the identity/difference package, and the question of regional loyalty more problematic.

And although 'region' has been discussed in terms of a 'level' of analysis for regional security<sup>2</sup>, there is no particular reason for appropriating this sort of structural analysis in discussing regional *identity*. Regional identity may rather be an anomaly alongside the 'normal' state identity. Or, alternatively, an 'evasion'<sup>3</sup> - a strategy for organising participation in another form of political community. I suggest that as there is no *a priori* reason why 'region' should be a 'level' of identity, there is also none which suggests that there should be a general resolution of the question of regional identity. It is as likely that this will be specific to the particular constituted region.

The point is, that where such regions are constituted, there must be powerful discourses at work to keep these regional boundary-making practices in operation. Practice shows willingness not only to take on Pacific identity - but to continue to 'invent' it, while it continues to be constructed as 'other' to different 'selves'.

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<sup>1</sup>Buzan's notion of regional security complexes will be taken up below (Buzan, *op. cit.*). He does not suggest, however, that these stand in an analogous relation to states in the state system.

<sup>2</sup>E.g. in Buzan (*op. cit.*). I will be critiquing this below.

<sup>3</sup>The term is from Falk (Falk, Richard. "Evasions of Sovereignty" In *Contending Sovereignities: Redefining Political Community*, ed. R. B. J. Walker and Saul H. Mendlovitz (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990, pp. 61-78.



Long time observer of South Pacific affairs, Richard Herr, has recently suggested the marginalisation of the South Pacific in the face of a growing Asia-Pacific regionalism.<sup>1</sup> From an Australian perspective, it is quite apparent that much of the discussion of 'our region' now means a Pacific Rim, Pacific Basin, or an Asia-Pacific one. This points to both the constructedness and political nature of the idea of region.

This re-making of 'region' is being countered by Pacific Islanders' efforts to reclaim the Pacific as theirs. At the second Pacific Islands Conference (1985) island leaders noted their concern with a developing consciousness of the Pacific as the Pacific rim. Similar concerns were voiced three years later at a conference on the United States and the South Pacific. Referring to the use of ideas like the Pacific rim and the Pacific century (meaning the United States and Japan, China and the NICs), Charles Lepani spoke for many when he said "In the Pacific, we object to that use of Pacific in that context. We are the Pacific."<sup>2</sup>

The new Asia-Pacific regionalism, with its self-consciousness basis in economic relations is in sharp contrast to the Pacific region of Pacific Islanders. Not long ago the chairman of the Japan External Trade Organisation remarked: "There are differences in race, religion, culture and language. It would be no exaggeration to say that virtually the only common denominator shared by these many countries is that they border on the Pacific Ocean."<sup>3</sup> It can, however, be seen to constitute a "definable economic system."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Herr, Richard A. "Concluding Observations" In The South Pacific: Problems, Issues and Prospects, ed. Ramesh Thakur (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, in association with the University of Otago, 1991), p. 209-210.

<sup>2</sup>Lepani, Charles. "[Remarks]" In The United States and the South Pacific: A Conference Report, Apia, Western Samoa, November 1988, (San Francisco: Asia Foundation Center for Asian-Pacific Affairs, 1989), p. 104.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Daly, M. T. and John Connell. "The New Pacific Pirates" Pacific Islands Monthly 57: 12 (December 1987), p. 38.

<sup>4</sup>Viviani discusses the Asia-Pacific region as one of economic links: "This limited region constitutes a definable economic system chiefly because of the high degree of economic

This is both a different sense of regional 'identity' and a far cry from the discourses of culture and history that constitute much of the 'Pacific' of the 'South Pacific' and of 'Pacific' islanders. The construction of an Asia-Pacific 'region' and the rise of Asia-Pacific regionalism pose a challenge to the notion of what it means to be 'Pacific'. The new Asia-Pacific regionalism and the assertiveness by Pacific Islanders over 'their' Pacific are two contemporary aspects of a continual process of regional boundary-making.

### Boundary-making and Discourse

The meaning content of boundaries and what they enclose/divide is produced through discourse<sup>1</sup> and practice.

Discourse produces (and reproduces) 'society' - the social environment in which human beings must necessarily live. It thus both creates 'culture' (in anthropological terms) and produces relations of power. Discourse is not equally shared; rights to a 'speaking position' are regulated. This notion of discourse "purposely blurs together three levels of meaning: the act of talking itself; a body of knowledge content that is talked about; and a set of conditions and procedures which regulate that talking."<sup>2</sup>

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interaction in trade and investment among these Asian states and between them and the US and Canada." And notes 60% of trade with each other. (Viviani, Nancy. "The Regional Political Economy" In *Australia and the World: Prologue and Prospects*, ed. Desmond Ball (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1990, pp. 146--164), p. 147.

<sup>1</sup>I find the notion of discourse a very helpful way in to examining how things (e.g. 'region') are constructed. I am not, however, using a 'discourse theory' approach in any methodological sense. Although the general notion of 'deconstruction' is similarly helpful, I avoid the use of the term because of its connection with particular analytical techniques developed from literary theory. My theoretical borrowings here from what has variously been called 'critical theory', 'post-structuralism', or 'post-modernism' are largely from the way these ideas have been used by those working in the fields of international relations, anthropology and history.

<sup>2</sup>Lindstrom, Lamont. *Knowledge and Power in a South Pacific Society* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), p. xii. The focus on 'talking' and 'speaking positions' has particular relevance in the oral societies of Tanna (in Vanuatu) which are the focus of Lindstrom's study, but has a broader meaning in the Foucauldian tradition from which he draws.

All practice is thus discursive - informed by and participating in discourse. "All practices, whether economic or cultural [or political] depend on the representations individuals use to make sense of their world."<sup>1</sup> In this sense practice is not that of free agency (as in the so-called agent/structure dichotomy). Yet shaped by contingency and strategic - practical - considerations, it maintains a capacity for innovation. Practice both reproduces and transforms 'structure'<sup>2</sup> as "meanings are revalued as they are practically enacted."<sup>3</sup>

Boundary-making through discourse and practice thus sites the 'region'. Although one may, for analytical purposes distinguish a number of discourses to examine, it is not a question of 'discovering' what are the discourses in play so that they may be put together to 'get' the region. That is, the region is not created by their convergence or juxtaposition which then somehow supplies us with a 'whole' region.

As there is no 'identity' which can be essentially, fundamentally attached to a person or group, neither is it a case of adding them up.<sup>4</sup> This notion of 'quantitative knowledge' in fact stands in the way of understanding. Writing in the field of anthropology, Nicholas Thomas has observed: "One obstacle here is the commonsense epistemology which no doubt accords

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<sup>1</sup>Hunt, Lynn. "Introduction: History, Culture, and Text" In The New Cultural History, ed. and with an introduction by Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 19. My addition.

<sup>2</sup>I am using 'structure' here in the 'structuration' sense of Giddens, where "structure is both the medium and the outcome of. . . practices" (Giddens, Anthony. Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 10. The relation of structure and practice is also the focus of Bourdieu's work (Bourdieu, Pierre. Outline of a Theory of Practice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

<sup>3</sup>Sahlins, Marshall. Islands of History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. vii. Sahlins' notion of structure is one of meaningful (cultural) categories. Biersack considers that Giddens theory "generalizes" Sahlins' model (Biersack, Aletta. "Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and Beyond" In The New Cultural History, ed. and with an introduction by Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p.89). My reading of Sahlins is that he is somewhat more 'structuralist' than either Giddens or Bourdieu.

<sup>4</sup>Connolly criticises those theorists who talk "as if identity were fractured and needs to be solidified." (Connolly, op. cit. p. 172.)



with a broader cultural model - that understands knowledge primarily in quantitative terms. Defects are absences that can be rectified through the addition of further information, and more can be known about a particular topic by adding other ways of perceiving it. "Bias" is thus associated with a lack and can be rectified or balanced out by the addition of further perspectives."<sup>1</sup>

There is not in the end, one region which may be discovered, but 'different regions for different occasions.' Region is a construct which establishes an inside and an outside, but what is in and what is out is contingent, relational and contested.

The South Pacific - or more broadly (and historically) the 'Pacific' - has never been something 'natural (e.g. a purely geographic entity) but only 'exists' in terms of some particular conception of it. Its 'meaning content' is in the way it has been constructed through identity-making, boundary-making processes.

The South Pacific we know is a historical construction; this does not mean, however, that it is possible to trace its origins. Rather, using a 'genealogical' approach we may look for beginnings rather than causes. This approach allows for a recognition of the participating discourses present at whatever moment is chosen.

This 'Pacific' became a site of practices which then served to reinforce, re-create, or re-make it. Such practices are 'discursively mediated', i.e. they participate in and are regulated by discourse. Some of these discourses were of 'region' - reinforcing a regional identity directly. Others were of identity, or community that could not be enclosed in alternative boundaries, such as the state. Each of these draws on wider discourses of international relations and on interpretations of context.

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas, Nicholas. "Against Ethnography" *Cultural Anthropology* 6: 3 (August 1991), p. 308.

None of these can be isolated in practice, but for analytical purposes I propose to separate two 'clumps' of discourses - one having to do with discourses of culture and history, the other with discourses of 'international order.'

### Beginnings in 'Oceania'

I choose for my 'beginnings' that 'moment' when the European practice of exploration (the 'voyages of discovery') and European enlightenment ideas about the place of man in the world encountered the peoples of the islands in the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific Ocean had, of course, had a place in the European imagination since Magellan's transversing (1520-1521). And apart from its island peoples, the ocean itself may be said, as in Spate's distinction between 'Oceanic' and 'Insular' history, to constitute a "field of economic and military power" through the "webs of communications" which cross it.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless it was the interpretation of the 'contact' experience which first 'created' the Pacific as a 'region' - giving it an 'identity' by siting it in meaning as well as in space.

This encounter produced what I will call here discourses of 'Oceania' - of a 'region' bounded by an identity as Pacific islanders.<sup>2</sup> Such discourse intersects with all other discourses about the Pacific. Its suggestion of a commonality among Pacific islanders (and interpretations of what this consists of) draws on ideas from Pacific studies, particularly anthropology

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<sup>1</sup>Spate, O. H. K. "The Pacific as an Artefact" In The Changing Pacific: Essays in Honour of H. E. Maude, ed. Niel Gunson (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 33. Spate went on to develop the notion of the Pacific as a European artefact in the three volumes of his The Pacific since Magellan.

<sup>2</sup>This is, in different ways, both broader and narrower than that of the colonial-inspired South Pacific Commission, or the South Pacific Forum (see below for discussion of these). In terms of geography, it most commonly includes the Polynesian peoples of Hawaii and New Zealand, and excludes Australia (with the sometimes exception of the Torres Straits Islanders).

and history, and on contemporary islanders' beliefs concerning a 'Pacific community.' Such an 'Oceanic' discourse is, of course, inseparable from the political use made of it; is a political as well as an historical construct.

"Cultural. . . politics...is the constant reconstitution of selves and others through specific exclusions, conventions, and discursive practices."<sup>1</sup>

### Oceania: Heritage and Authentication

"...tradition is an instrumental and contingent category, constructed and used in the present for contemporary ends."<sup>2</sup>

In both Pacific history and Pacific anthropology there is now a great deal of interest in 'the invention of tradition'<sup>3</sup>, while contemporary political affairs in the South Pacific reveal much of what one might call the deployment of tradition. In the inaugural issue of The Contemporary Pacific<sup>4</sup>, Roger Keesing noted how : "Across the Pacific... Pacific peoples are creating pasts, myths of ancestral ways of life that serve as powerful political symbols."<sup>5</sup> What is of particular interest here is to what extent these are 'Pacific traditions' or a 'Pacific culture.' - i.e. to what extent are they 'regional.'

A sense of 'indigenist awareness'<sup>6</sup> seems rather to have developed together at 'regional' and more local sites. That is, there are in a sense, two

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<sup>1</sup>Clifford, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Linnekin, Jocelyn. "Fine Mats and Money: Contending Exchange Paradigms in Colonial Samoa" Anthropological Quarterly 64: 1(Jan 1991), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Much of this shows the influence of Hobsbawm's 1983 introductory essay in Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, eds. The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>4</sup>The Contemporary Pacific: A Journal of Island Affairs (Honolulu : Center for Pacific Islands Studies & University of Hawaii Press) began publishing in 1989.

<sup>5</sup>Keesing, Roger M. "Creating the Past: Custom and Identity in the Contemporary Pacific" The Contemporary Pacific I: 1&2 (Spring & Fall, 1989), p. 19.

<sup>6</sup>This term is from Jackson. See Jackson, Jean. "Is There a Way to Talk about Making Culture without Making Enemies?" Dialectical Anthropology 14: 2 (1989), pp. 127-143.



processes going on: *making identity* through making 'region', and *making region* through making identity. These processes are linked by a concern with "heritage and authentication"<sup>1</sup>. Popularly cast in terms of the 'Pacific Way' (see below), such identity-making, boundary-making practices and discourses are centred on the notion of *authenticity*.

How to understand the notion of authenticity lies behind recent debates over the 'invention of culture'. Anthropological and historical discussions of 'the invention of culture' have not always been greeted kindly.<sup>2</sup> "The concern, at times phrased as an accusation, is that writing about the contemporary construction or "invention" of culture undercuts the cultural authority of indigenous peoples by calling into question their authenticity."<sup>3</sup>

The debate over Allan Hanson's article "The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and Its Logic"<sup>4</sup> is illustrative. Hanson's paper traced the influence of Western discourses on the representation of Maori oral tradition. The essay became the subject of a New York Times article, and received extensive coverage in the New Zealand press. In a discussion in American Anthropologist of the ensuing controversy Linnekin noted: "It is not merely fortuitous that the New York Times writer sought to place Hanson's essay in the context of contemporary anthropological theory, while journalists in New Zealand's capital emphasized the invention of Maori culture - this in the sesquicentennial anniversary year of the Treaty of

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<sup>1</sup> Dark, Philip J. C. "Tomorrow's Heritage is Today's Art, and Yesteryear's Identity" In Art and Identity in Oceania, ed. Allan Hanson and Louise Hanson (Bathurst: Crawford House Press, 1990), p. 244.

<sup>2</sup>Critics include those of a more positivistic scholarly bent, as well as political activists concerned with indigenous rights.

<sup>3</sup>Linnekin, Jocelyn. "Cultural Invention and the Dilemma of Authenticity" American Anthropologist 93 (1991), p. 446.

<sup>4</sup>Hanson, Allan. "The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and Its Logic" American Anthropologist 91 (1989):890-902.

Waitangi, as Maori land claims are being contested in New Zealand and Maori culture is an issue in the struggle."<sup>1</sup>

Hanson's reply<sup>2</sup> in the same issue discussed the dilemma he faced, referring to the aptly named article by Jean Jackson "Is There a Way to Talk about Making Culture without Making Enemies?"<sup>3</sup> The use of the term 'invention', he argues has been taken up, not because it has a precise scholarly meaning but as a "rhetorical device" setting the reader up for the observation that "it is in the nature of all cultural traditions to be invented."<sup>4</sup>

Hanson goes on to suggest that anthropologists' "responsibility to communicate successfully" is perhaps not best served by the use of terminology so liable to be misinterpreted, and while affirming his approach and his analysis of Maori culture, he apologizes to those who were "understandably offended" by the use of the term 'invention'.<sup>5</sup>

Hanson's personal response notwithstanding (one might feel that the term 'invention' *with* all of its baggage is appropriate indeed, or that critics who miss the point are to be pitied not appeased) understanding/s of the the relationship between 'construction' and 'authenticity' remains a central issue. "Most often 'traditional culture' is seen as a good thing, something that should be safeguarded. But in order to be thought of as good, culture must not be seen as invented or created, except over a long period of time."<sup>6</sup>

Thus Hau'ofa refers to the present chiefly systems of Tonga and Fiji as 19th century creations - combining "indigenous and non-indigenous elements. Yet these systems are considered 'traditional' by Fijians and

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<sup>1</sup>Linnekin, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup>Hanson, Allan. "Reply to Langdon, Levine, and Linnekin" *American Anthropologist* 93 (1991), p. 450. Of interest here is his 'reply' to Linnekin's sympathetic appraisal.

<sup>3</sup>Jackson, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup>Hanson, *op. cit.*, p. 450; he refers here to Linnekin's argument on this.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 450.

<sup>6</sup>Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

Tongans alike." Hau'ofa goes on to distinguish between these old traditions held "by a given population over a period of time, say, one hundred or so years" and those traditional practices and values "deliberately created and cultivated recently by island leaders" but "increasingly accepted and having potential for long term growth and survival. . . ." <sup>1</sup> He then wants, however, to distinguish between 'indigenous' and non-indigenous elements in tradition. "The non-indigenous elements are those aspects of a tradition that were introduced from cultures outside the Pacific islands region." <sup>2</sup>

Hau'ofa has been very critical of the notion of the Pacific Way (see below) but this distinction over the notion of 'indigenous' tradition points to the way in which 'region' has been located in terms of a 'Pacific' indigeness, with 'indigenous' meaning what was there at the time of European contact, while the Pacific 'region' (in my terms, that of 'Oceania') is that which encountered the Europeans at a particular (late) phase of the latter's expansion. This concept of the 'indigenous' is important in relation to the processes of identity-making and region-making noted above, and will be taken up again below.

The notion of an 'Oceanic' heritage has two strands: islanders' claims of Pacific community, and the histories (and anthropologies) which have constructed the frame within which such stories are told. The former is exemplified in the claims and rhetoric of Pacific island leaders, for example Ratu Mara in his keynote address at the first Pacific Islands Conference : "We should not be trying to build a Pacific Community. We should be

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<sup>1</sup>Hau'ofa, Epeli. "The Future of Our Past" In *The Pacific Islands in the Year 2000*, ed. Robert C. Kiste and Richard A. Herr (Honolulu: Pacific Studies Program, Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa, in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Development Program, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1985), p. 153.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 154.



trying to build upon a Pacific Community which is already in existence."<sup>1</sup> Typically this approach includes reference to ancestral ties and a common past, divided by colonial administrations.<sup>2</sup>

I will return below to the way this approach has been epitomized in the 'Pacific Way'. First, however, I would like to look at the second strand by tracing briefly the development of Pacific studies - particularly Pacific history and anthropology - which has framed so much of Pacific discourse.

### Heritage: History and Anthropology

"History is not the past, any more than anthropology is the different. History is a conscious relationship between past and present; anthropology is a conscious relationship between familiar and strange. In re-presenting the past, in re-constructing the different, there is no avoiding our present or ourselves."<sup>3</sup>

It appears that from the time of the earliest European exploration in the islands of the Pacific Ocean, there was an assumption of unity, although there was an early division into Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia.<sup>4</sup> European observers, drawing largely on their experiences in Polynesia, noted and drew conclusions from their informants' belief in a common origin in 'Heawije' and from language similarities.<sup>5</sup> One result of this work

<sup>1</sup>Mara, Ratu Sir Kamisese. "Pacific Islands' Development" [Keynote Address] In Proceedings of the 'Pacific Islands Conference: Development the Pacific Way', March 26-29, 1980, Honolulu, Hawaii (Honolulu: East-West Center, Pacific Islands Development Program, 1980), p.72.

<sup>2</sup>Writing in 1971, Maude, interestingly, raised the following concerning studying the region: "... it remains to be seen whether the region retains a sufficient homogeneity for integrated treatment after its political partition by the European powers." (Maude, H. E. "Pacific History - Past, Present and Future" Journal of Pacific History VI (1971), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Dening, Greg. Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land, Marquesas 1774-1880 (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>The classification of D'Urville in 1830.

<sup>5</sup>Two early published accounts of voyages, those of Forster (1778) and Hawkesworth (1773) are noted in Hooper (Hooper, Antony. "Introduction" to Transformations of Polynesian Culture, ed. Antony Hooper & Judith Huntsman (Auckland: The Polynesian Society, 1985), p. 2. Forster noted that there appeared to be two main types of peoples, later seen as the

was the equation in the popular European imagination of 'Polynesian' with 'Pacific'.<sup>1</sup>

Early anthropological work<sup>2</sup> thus took a special interest in the origins and migration of Pacific people, and field work often focused on gathering similarities in order to trace their expansion from a presumed home. At the same time, local cultures were often taken as a given; anthropologists worked in an 'ethnographic present'. This early ethnographic work - focusing on similarities and ignoring history - tended to give a veneer of unity to islanders' cultures. "In many of even the most worthy Bishop Museum ethnographies it is difficult to tell whether many of the practices described were still being followed or whether they were part of the people's own construction of their past - and, indeed, what kind of documentary evidence there might be for them. All was conflated into a mish-mash of 'customs and tradition'."<sup>3</sup>

The unity of 'Pacific History', when such histories began to be written, came initially from its origin in 'Imperial History'. This approach was challenged in the 1950s by the island-oriented Pacific history advocated by J. W. Davidson at the newly established Department of Pacific History at the Australian National University. In a much quoted article in Volume I of The Journal of Pacific History, Davidson argued that the imperial histories "inevitably impose a spurious unity on their subject matter."<sup>4</sup> His

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Polynesian/Melanesian distinction. Hawkesworth pointed to the issues of common origin and language.

<sup>1</sup>Pacific Way critics have pointed to this Polynesian element in the construction of a 'Pacific' identity. Melanesian resentment of European preference and promotion of the Polynesians, including the sending of Polynesian missionaries to Melanesian societies, is a background factor in Melanesian separate identity-making.

<sup>2</sup>Two influential organisations were founded in the late 19th century - the Bishop Museum in 1889 (in Hawaii), and the Polynesian Society in 1892 (in New Zealand). The Bishop Museum's ethnographic expeditions were particularly influential in Polynesian studies.

<sup>3</sup>Hooper, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Davidson, J. W. "Problems of Pacific History" Journal of Pacific History I (1966), p. 8.

suggestion was to employ a broad context of European expansion<sup>1</sup>, but then to "shift the centre of interest from the metropolitan capitals to the islands themselves."<sup>2</sup> Since Pacific history was "so largely concerned with contact,"<sup>3</sup> the "central concern [of the historian] must be with the character of this transformation."<sup>4</sup>

A view of this 'transformation' as one of 'fatal impact'<sup>5</sup> has, according to Howe, a "long-standing tradition" beginning "with some of the eighteenth-century explorers who had little doubt that their coming was but a prelude to the destruction of the nobility and arcadian simplicity that they believed characterised at least some aspects of island living."<sup>6</sup> Noting the way in which the view of a 'primevally innocent' Pacific, with Pacific islanders in the role of the 'noble savage', was itself a European construction, he also points out: "In other words, if there was no Paradise there cannot be a Paradise Lost."<sup>7</sup>

A change in late 18th century European thought, influenced by increasing missionisation, to viewing these 'pagans' as 'ignoble savages', simply promoted a different Western vision of the 'Other.' Linnekin points to how particular contact experiences and their interpretation - and reinterpretation - "illustrate the dialectical relationship between Western Orientalist visions

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup>The title of a 1968 book by Alan Moorehead. (*The Fatal Impact: An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific 1767-1840* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968). Moorehead's interpretation of Pacific history is not untypical of this view of the change caused by islanders' contact with Europeans.

<sup>6</sup>Howe, K. R. *Where the Waves Fall: A New South Sea Islands History from First Settlement to Colonial Rule* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), p. 348. Howe notes that a fatalism regarding eventual extinction of the populations was still in vogue in the 1920s (*Ibid.*, p. 349).

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 351.



of Pacific Islanders and contact encounters on particular beaches."<sup>1</sup> This notion of "Orientalism" (from Said's eloquent book of that title<sup>2</sup>) "identifies persistent tropes" by which 'the West' has interpreted the 'Other'. "The Orient functions as a theater, a stage on which a performance is repeated, to be seen from a privileged standpoint."<sup>3</sup>

In a case study of the changing Western construction of the Samoan character, Linnekin analyses how the 'savage' Samoans of the Fagasa incident (in which 12 Frenchmen of the La Perouse expedition were killed in 1787) were 'rehabilitated' through a combination of the increased commercial attraction of Samoa and Anglo-American/French political rivalry. Criticism of the behaviour of the French led to a general view that the earlier voyagers had used injudicious behaviour. This permitted "empathy" with the Samoans and allowed for an interpretation of native sentiment as nationalism.<sup>4</sup>

The island-oriented approach and the critiques of 'fatal impact' were both aimed at placing the islanders back in the center of their histories. This was also given impetus by the process of decolonisation. As one Pacific historian noted: Pacific History "has a practical and therapeutic role to enact in assisting the rehabilitation of the Pacific peoples at the end of a traumatic era of European political, economic and technological ascendancy. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Linnekin, Jocelyn. "Ignoble Savages and Other European Visions" *Journal of Pacific History* XXVI: 1 (June 1991), p. 4. The change in European views is traced by Smith (Smith, Bernard. *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960).

<sup>2</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

<sup>3</sup>Clifford, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>Linnekin, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-26. Comparing Samoa with Hawaii, Linnekin suggests that this 'rehabilitation' would have happened earlier in Samoa if there had been the same economic attraction there (*Ibid.*, p. 25).

<sup>5</sup>Maude, *op. cit.*, p. 24. For Maude's comments on the response of the SPC to his report recommending such a role for Pacific history, see below.

Howe's critique of 'fatal impact'<sup>1</sup> pointed to its assumptions "that Europeans were culturally and technologically superior, the Islanders implicitly or explicitly inferior, passive, and unable to cope with the white man's all-powerful way of life."<sup>2</sup> The "re-writing of colonisation as a much more dynamic process"<sup>3</sup> thus took as its focus the islanders' response to the challenges of contact. For much of this, there was still an assumption of the primacy of contact in determining Pacific history, but this contact was a double-sided process and local response played a key role. "The nature of local response seems to depend on a 'cost-benefit analysis' by the leadership of each group, as well as the compensating resources which the group possessed."<sup>4</sup> Drawing on analyses of the colonial relationship developed elsewhere, the concept of 'resistance' was sometimes used to describe this experience.<sup>5</sup>

The use of the term 'resistance' to describe this aspect of islander history has been criticised by Bronwen Douglas for a misplaced emphasis on the Islander-European relationship in the face of what were often more important local struggles.<sup>6</sup> She argues for a focus on local inter-group relationships, but also notes also the need for a methodology which "correlates this essentially local and particularistic perspective with the broader context created by a colonial regime, and examines the strengths and limitations of colonial power, relative to time and place, both locally and in

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<sup>1</sup>Howe, *op. cit.*; and Howe, K. R. "The Fate of the "Savage" in Pacific historiography" *New Zealand Journal of History* 11 (1977), pp. 137-54.

<sup>2</sup>Howe, K. R. *Where the Waves Fall*, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

<sup>3</sup>Leckie, Jacqueline. "Towards a Review of History in the South Pacific" *The Journal of Pacific Studies* 9 (1983), p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Hempenstall, Peter J. *Pacific Islanders under German Rule: A Study in the Meaning of Colonial Resistance* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1978), p. 205.

<sup>5</sup>Hempenstall, Peter and Noel Rutherford. *Protest and Dissent in the Colonial Pacific* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1984), p. 1-2.

<sup>6</sup>Douglas, Bronwen. "Conflict and Alliance in a Colonial Context: Case Studies in New Caledonia 1853-1879" *Journal of Pacific History* XV: Part 1 (1980), p. 21-22.

the wider context."<sup>1</sup> A more positive view of response drew a distinction between 'resistance' (failure to cooperate) and 'protest' which "involves positive actions to bring about change in a system."<sup>2</sup> Thus "Tonga is an example of effective political protest through the adoption of western-style constitutional instruments and the manipulation of western legal sanctions whilst, paradoxically, drawing ever closer to the British crown."<sup>3</sup>

In more recent times then, the question of how to view this 'transformation' has engendered a debate concerning the notion of 'fatal impact', its critique, and a renewed defense of a sort of fatal impact from the structural/political economy 'school'.

This renewed defense of 'fatal impact', or perhaps more accurately, this critique of the critiques of 'fatal impact', focused on the political motives of such history-writing and on the question of context. This line of argument pointed to a tendency "to divorce Pacific history from significant political processes outside the islands."<sup>4</sup> These critics argued for a Pacific history contextualised by its incorporation into the world capitalist system. This approach is most commonly related to critiques of the Pacific Way and will be taken up below.

An alternative approach may be seen as side-stepping issues of 'response' and 'incorporation', and suggesting a local determining context. "The world of larger systems and events has thus often been seen as externally impinging on and bounding little worlds, but not as integral to them."<sup>5</sup> An alternative suggestion is to view the broad context (or macrosystem) as it is

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Hempenstall and Rutherford, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8. The discussion refers to Tonga during the colonial period in the Pacific.

<sup>4</sup>Leckie, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup>Marcus, George E. "Contemporary Problems Of Ethnography in the Modern World System" In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, *op. cit.*, p. 166.



"subtly imagined or registered within the ongoing life processes of . . . [the] interpreted microsituation."<sup>1</sup> From this perspective, all history is local.

In such fashion Sahlins, looking at capitalism in the Pacific, suggests that "we shall have to examine how indigenous peoples struggle to integrate their experience of the world system in something that is logically and ontologically more inclusive: their own system of the world."<sup>2</sup> In another example, referring to a recent study on Western Samoa, Hooper remarks that it draws attention "to the manner in which the *matai* system (which, according to Samoan testimony, has "always" been present) is now intimately bound up with the institutional structures of commerce, bureaucracy, the professions and, of course, political life. As events have unfolded, it is in many cases a matter for conjecture whether what is involved is modern institutions whose workings are affected by traditional concerns, or whether these same institutions are simply appearing as the latest manifestation of the *matai* system."<sup>3</sup>

Examining these 'beginnings' in interpretations of the 'contact' experience points to the importance of both 'Orientalist' visions and local identity-making strategies in constructing a regional identity.

The assumptions in both history and anthropology that it is possible to talk about the Pacific as some kind of whole appears then to derive broadly

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 169. Marcus refers to Knorr-Cetina's "three techniques for integrating micro and macro levels textually. First, the macrosystem may be portrayed as the mere summation of microsituations or processes. Second, the macro may be represented as a result of the totality of unintended consequences emanating from the multitude of microsituations. Third, macrosystems may be represented as they are subtly imagined or registered within the ongoing life processes of an intensely studied and interpreted microsituation." (Knorr-Cetina, K. and A. V. Cicourel, eds. *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Toward an Integration of Micro- and Macro-Sociologies* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981). The context of Marcus' discussion is the writing of ethnographic texts. I am using it here more broadly as a way of looking at 'context'.

<sup>2</sup>Sahlins, Marshall. 'Cosmologies of Capitalism: the Trans-Pacific Sector of 'The World System' *Proceedings of the British Academy* 74 (1988), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Hooper, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

from from a view of a common experience of being a Pacific islander - whether that common experience is from commonalities of culture, or from historical, often put as colonial, experience. That it means something to be a Pacific islander - although concerning what that meaning might be (and from what it is derived) there are various interpretations.

The construction of 'Pacific' identity is the theme of a recent volume edited by Linnekin and Poyer.<sup>1</sup> Drawing an analogy with Sahlins' notion of "performative structures"<sup>2</sup>, they observe that "... Pacific Islanders can be said to construct their identities out of practice."<sup>3</sup> In this view Oceanic identity is less a case of 'biology' (as 'ethnicity' in Western cultures) than of "context, situation, performance, and place."<sup>4</sup>

This anthropological interpretation of Oceanic identity is interesting in light of the frequent assumption among both Pacific islanders and analysts of Pacific affairs, that the existence of regional practices - as demonstrated in the construction and use of regional institutions, for example - shows that there is a sense of regional identity.<sup>5</sup> The way in which 'regional' identities have been constructed out of political practice in a context of 'commonalities' of political and economic experience in the decolonisation period and following independence, will be taken up below. First, however, I would like to turn to the 'Pacific Way.'

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<sup>1</sup>Linnekin, Jocelyn and Lin Poyer, eds. Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990).

<sup>2</sup>Sahlins, Marshall. Islands of History, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Linnekin and Poyer, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>These practices have also produced such regional identity. For a discussion of such region-making, see below.

### Authentication: the 'Pacific Way'

The notion of the 'Pacific Way' has been used to say something about both enclosure and process. It can be seen as a self-conscious linking of discourse and practice with the construction of identity.

"The term, 'The Pacific Way' was launched on the international stage by Fiji's Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, in an address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1970."<sup>1</sup> This articulation, in the context of Fiji's approaching independence, and its assertive role in efforts to decolonise regional affairs, had a clearly political purpose. Suggesting a "non-confrontational, consensual style of conducting discussions and arriving at decisions. . . . [the Pacific Way] has also come to signify a common concern for the social and economic well-being of all participant members - large and small."<sup>2</sup>

Mara's 'Pacific Way' may be seen as both cultural claim and strategy. It coincided with, and arguably was strongly influenced by developments in South Pacific regionalism.<sup>3</sup>

Indigenous South Pacific regionalism is usually dated from the 1965 'Lae Rebellion' led by Ratu Mara in which island representatives gained 'control' of the South Pacific Commission.<sup>4</sup> The SPC, which had been established in 1947 by the six metropolitan governments involved in the South Pacific at

<sup>1</sup>Crocombe, Ron. The Pacific Way: an Emerging Identity (Suva: Lotu Pasifika, 1976), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Fairbairn, Te'o I. J. et al. The Pacific Islands: Politics, Economics, and International Relations (Honolulu: East-West Center, International Relations Program, 1991), p. 66-67.

<sup>3</sup>'Regionalism' and 'regional cooperation' would appear to have different resonances. I don't propose here to discuss regionalism as an 'ideology.' What I have noticed in the literature is that the term 'regional cooperation' now appears to be used more frequently in connection with the South Pacific. This suggests some interesting lines of thought, which are not, however, the purview of this paper.

<sup>4</sup>Salato, E. M. "South Pacific Regionalism - 'Unity in Diversity'" South Pacific Bulletin 26:4 (1976, Fourth Quarter), pp. 30-35; Fry, G. E. South Pacific Regionalism: The Development of an Indigenous Commitment (Canberra: M.A.Thesis, Dept. of Political Science, ANU, 1979). 'Rebellion' was Mara's own term for it.



the time - Australia, New Zealand,<sup>1</sup> Great Britain, France, Netherlands, and the United States - was intended to be limited to issues of the welfare and development of 'their' territories; political questions were excluded.<sup>2</sup>

The gathering together of island leaders had, however, the effect of providing a forum (unofficially) for just such questions. Salato has urged that only post-1965 regionalism be called South Pacific regionalism<sup>3</sup>, i.e. only the 'control' by islanders makes it truly South Pacific.<sup>4</sup> As Fry has noted: "There is more than semantics involved in Dr. Salato's terminology. Observers usually refer to all regional activity, whether involving Islanders or not, as 'South Pacific regionalism'."<sup>5</sup>

The Pacific Way was thus part of the debate about rights to speak 'for', 'as' and 'to' the 'region.', while being itself constitutive of region.

With the popularisation of the notion of the Pacific Way, however, it came to also be used as an approach to explaining or interpreting affairs in the Pacific. The Pacific Way critiques of the early eighties, especially those originating from the University of the South Pacific by Howard, Durutalo<sup>6</sup> and others using mainly a political economy, if not a determinedly Marxist approach, were largely aimed at this latter use of the Pacific Way in explanation of South Pacific affairs.

<sup>1</sup>On the Australian and New Zealand interest in establishing a South Pacific region, see below.

<sup>2</sup>Other aspects of the SPC's role in region-making will be taken up below. Of the six metropolitan governments in the SPC, five remain. The Netherlands left after the incorporation of Irian Jaya into Indonesia in 1962.

<sup>3</sup>Salato, *op. cit.*, p. 31-32 and 35. Salato's remarks were made in an address to the AIIA at the time when he was Secretary-General of the SPC.

<sup>4</sup>Such 'control' was more firmly established six years later (1971) with the establishment of the South Pacific Forum. The role of the SPC in regional construction is discussed below.

<sup>5</sup>Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>6</sup>Howard's work is discussed further below; Durutalo, Simone. "Buccaneers and Chiefly Historians" [Review essay of *Matanitu* by David Routledge] *Journal of Pacific Studies* 11 (1985), pp. 117-156.

This Pacific Way debate was thus about many other things than the validity or use of Mara's formulation as popularised by Crocombe.<sup>1</sup> It was about nothing less than how to interpret both domestic relations, and the place of the island Pacific in the international system.

The most influential critique of the Pacific Way was that posited by Michael Howard<sup>2</sup> and it forms part of his (and others) work on class analysis in the Pacific. In Howard's interpretation, the Pacific Way is "an ideology supporting the interests of the indigenous elite."<sup>3</sup> "While use of the term 'The Pacific Way' is varied and often vague, there are certain central notions within an overall framework of the maintenance of tradition: communalism, consensus, conformity and uniqueness."<sup>4</sup> Howard's criticism of the chiefly system, and of the idea of a Pacific tradition in general, focused on its role in class exploitation, but also noted the way in which it was a product of colonialism and its "strong Polynesian flair."<sup>5</sup> Howard's attack on the chiefly system drew heavily on his experience of Fiji. His recent writing on the Fiji coups<sup>6</sup> finds him still engaged in battle with the Pacific Way, rather denying his claim that it had been successfully debunked.

The Pacific Way was also blamed for redirecting post-colonial analyses of the Pacific. "Instead of examining the structural transformation of Pacific societies, much effort was devoted by non-Marxist scholars to describing pre-European cultural organisations, kinship systems, trade networks, the

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<sup>1</sup>Crocombe, Ron. "Seeking a Pacific Way" in The Pacific Way : Social Issues in National Development, ed. Sione Tupouniua, Ron Crocombe, Claire Slatter (Suva: South Pacific Social Sciences Association, 1975); and Crocombe, Ron. The Pacific Way: an Emerging Identity, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Howard, Michael C. 'Vanuatu: The Myth of Melanesian Socialism' Labour Capital and Society 16: 2 (November 1983), pp. 176-203. Howard's much-referenced critique of The Pacific Way here forms a sort of preamble to his critique of the Melanesian Socialism of Walter Lini.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 180-181.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 183. He points to this in the writings of Ron Crocombe.

<sup>6</sup>Howard, Michael C. Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1991).

achievements or failures of discrete groups such as explorers, traders, missionaries, beachcombers and colonial administrators. . . . Island-centred studies emerged at the time of decolonisation but were hijacked by Pacific Way scholars who substituted Islander nationalism for critical examination of the restructuring of island societies."<sup>1</sup>

Not all critics saw the debate in such either/or terms. Meleisea, who has also been critical of appeals to the Pacific Way as a way of avoiding confronting issues of conflict<sup>2</sup>, nevertheless objected to the eurocentrism and reductionism he saw in the Marxist critique of the Pacific Way.<sup>3</sup> In general however, the Pacific Way debate in the form engendered by the Howard critique, was about the use of those competing frameworks - nationalism and structuralism (of a world political economy kind) in interpreting Pacific affairs.

But, as was noted above, boundary assertion may be seen as taking place within an *interpretation* of context - not an 'incorporation' into it. It is this then which shapes how 'difference' is asserted. "One manifestation of this process is the evocation of an ideology of sharing and communality to distance a "Melanesian way" or a "Pacific way" or "Fijian custom" from the individualism and fragmentation of Western capitalist society."<sup>4</sup> This use of 'indigenist awareness' also takes place in a context where notions of

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<sup>1</sup>Naidu, Vijay and Jacqueline Leckie. "The Development of Class Analysis in the South Pacific" In *Labour in the South Pacific*, ed. Clive Moore, Jacqueline Leckie, Doug Munro (Townsville: James Cook University of Northern Queensland, 1990), pp. 245-246.

<sup>2</sup>Meleisea, Malama. "Pacific Historiography: An Indigenous View" *The Journal of Pacific Studies* 4 (1978), p 37.

<sup>3</sup>Meleisea criticises Howard's "Eurocentric Paleo-Marxism" (Meleisea, Malama and Penelope Schoeffel. "Saving Pacific Islanders from Themselves: Eurocentric Bias in Marxist Social Theory: Book Review" *Journal of Pacific Studies* 19 (1984), p. 95).

<sup>4</sup>Keesing, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Keesing points to the way this sort of identity discourse is derived from Western ideologies. In Keesing's terms "they have valorized elements of their own cultural traditions - decontextualized or transformed - as symbols of the contrast between those traditions and Western culture." (*Ibid.*, p. 28). This is not to say that Pacific islanders haven't also embraced many aspects of Western capitalist society.



region were integral to other identity-making, while interpretations of 'indigenous' suggested their own boundary-making processes.

*This* Pacific Way was about strategy - about taking an 'indigenist' awareness into political activism. It was about where and how to make political decisions. This 'Pacific Way' was thus about many other things than whether there was, or could be, a 'Pacific Way' way of doing things. It was about how sovereignty was to be seen and what it meant in a context where the 'national' to a large extent 'grew up' with the 'regional'. It was about that famous 70s concept 'appropriate'. Following appropriate technology, appropriate development, now appropriate political decision-making!

This Pacific Way was tied to institution-building. Haas has recently claimed that: "The style of negotiation known as The Pacific Way has supplied an important element in functional theory by showing that the most promising form of discussion between countries seeking to improve relations begins with areas of agreement and moves to areas of ambiguity, but scrupulously avoids unfruitful areas for cooperation."<sup>1</sup> 'The Pacific Way' and 'regionalism' are thus tied together by a conception of the place/role of 'practice' in constructing identity.

In the popular imagination the 'Pacific Way' has come to stand for what I have called here a discourse of 'Oceania'. More than any other formulation, it has come to stand for the political 'celebration of difference'. As such it has been appealed to in justifying island leaders' demands for a 'hands-off!' policy by outsiders during the Fiji coups and the Bougainville crisis. Or as

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<sup>1</sup>Haas, Michael. The Pacific Way: Regional Cooperation in the South Pacific (New York: Praeger, 1989), p. 168-169. Haas claims that the forms that these institutions have taken proves there is a Pacific Way; his book doesn't really offer a theory of the Pacific Way, however.

one Papua New Guinean informant once told Marshall Sahlins : if we didn't have 'kastom' we would be like white men.<sup>1</sup>

To call the Pacific Way a 'strategy' is not to call it 'in-authentic'. In fact that is to miss the point. And to misunderstand what happens in culture.<sup>2</sup> Culture is concerned with shared understandings and expectations, and the production and communication of meaning. "One moment is no more hybrid than the last, one response no less creative than that which was made before."<sup>3</sup> Culture is produced and shared through discourse and practice. "Being cultured means being able to read the signs, not for the univocal single meaning they have but for the meaning upon meaning that is piled up by context and condition."<sup>4</sup> The practice of cultural reproduction, however, "is never disinterested."<sup>5</sup>

Unlike the political economy critique, which in its own way reified 'culture', Pacific Way defenders accepted a more processual form - of the Pacific Way as a *search for* a Pacific regional identity or explanatory system, rather than a claim that one existed. Crocombe's early pieces on the Pacific Way were, after all, entitled "Seeking a Pacific Way", and The Pacific Way: an Emerging Identity.

This Pacific Way was thus about how to *authenticate* 'Pacific' identity through practice. One aspect concerned maintaining a role for tradition - and traditional leadership - in contemporary politics. This has been

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<sup>1</sup>Sahlins, Marshall. Lecture at HRC Conference 'Histories in Cultural Systems' (30 September - 3 October, 1991, Melbourne), personal notes.

<sup>2</sup>Jackson has referred to "how the term culture, because of some of the underlying assumptions in its conventional meanings, is anything but useful when we try to describe how people with an indigenist awareness of themselves modify their culture as part of their inter-ethnic strategies." (Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 127).

<sup>3</sup>Dening, Greg. Islands and Beaches, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup>Lindstrom, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

described in relation to the Micronesian Constitutional Conference (1975) in terms of a 'Micronesian Way':

"The values and principles that the traditional leaders of Micronesia utilized to enhance their legitimacy and effectiveness at the Con Con were embodied in an ideology called "the Micronesian way". . . . The "Micronesian way" stresses the principles of consensus and respect. According to this ideology, delegates should manifest great respect toward other delegates - particularly toward traditional leaders - and should avoid embarrassing them by confronting or contradicting them publicly. Disagreements are mediated more through private discussion than through public confrontation, and the importance of consensus in public is stressed. Because of the principles embodied in the "Micronesian way," the traditional leaders participated effectively in the Con Con."<sup>1</sup>

The problem for leaders of emergent or newly established nations has often been one of symbolising 'unity' (on which the nation is purportedly constructed). Using 'tradition' as a basis for nation-building can, however, lead to a 'Catch-22' type situation, where competing local traditions can destabilise the larger national unit. Thus, for example, Michael Somare's plaintive remark on the support for Bougainville secession at the time of independence: "The people encouraging secession were the very people who, in the past, had claimed to be champions of nationalism."<sup>2</sup>

The problem of 'building' and symbolising unity is complicated by the fact that the cultural boundaries which are called upon are constructed for many 'different occasions'; thus we (societies) are all 'multicultural' in our

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<sup>1</sup>Hughes, Daniel T. and Stanley K. Laughlin, Jr. "Key Elements in the Evolving Political Culture of the Federated States of Micronesia" In The Politics of Evolving Cultures in the Pacific Islands: Proceedings of a Conference Sponsored by The Institute for Polynesian Studies, Brigham Young University - Hawaii Campus, February 1982 (Laie: Institute for Polynesian Studies, Brigham Young University - Hawaii Campus, 1982), p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Somare, Michael. Sana: An Autobiography of Michael Somare (Port Moresby: Niugini Press, 1975), p. 141. His remark referred specifically to Momis and Kaputin joining Hannett on the Bougainville question.



cultural identity - participating in numerous cultural discourses and sharing unevenly in culture/s. In this situation of 'multiculturality', of multiple cultural identities, the choice of the 'Pacific' (i.e. 'Oceania') to symbolise unity domestically points to the way such 'region' is integral to other identity-making. Alternative formulations such as the 'Melanesian Way' appealed to, for example, in Papua New Guinea or Vanuatu nation-building suggest a similar process, although 'regionally' bounded differently.<sup>1</sup>

This is not to suggest the dominance of some sort of 'Pan-Pacific' discourse. Hau'ofa's critique of the Pacific Way<sup>2</sup> includes a consideration of whether Pacific island elites have constructed a Pan-Pacific identity. He sees the ruling classes of the South Pacific as becoming "increasingly culturally homogenous", [so that] for them the Pacific Way does provide an "elitist regional identity". For this group then there may be said to be a 'Pan-Pacific' culture. This is achieved by an 'idealization' and 'decontextualisation' of custom, influenced by Western ideologies of culture.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, however, the notion of the 'Pan-Pacific' is fairly uncommon. Discussions of the idea of a Pan-Pacific culture are mainly confined to the arts where new forms and styles, either mixing traditional forms and styles or synthesising with non-Pacific forms, may be said to be producing a Pan-Pacific art.<sup>4</sup> Although this has been pointed to as a particularly recent phenomena, at least one researcher has noted that "generalized Pacific artifacts were produced for sale on Pitcairn Island soon

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<sup>1</sup>Hau'ofa considers the 'Pacific Way' to be a sort of "stunted cousin" of the Melanesian Way (Hau'ofa, *op. cit.*, p. 168).

<sup>2</sup>Hau'ofa, Epeli. "The New South Pacific Society: Integration and Independence" In *Class and Culture in the South Pacific*, ed. Antony Hooper et al. (Auckland and Suva: Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Auckland and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1987), pp. 1- 12, esp. p. 3 and 7.

<sup>3</sup>Keesing, *op. cit.* Hau'ofa has pointed to the paradox of the danger elites pose to the preservation of the indigenous elements of tradition, while also being the conscious promoters of efforts for cultural preservation (Hau'ofa, "The Future of Our Past" *op. cit.*, p. 163-164).

<sup>4</sup>Dark, *op. cit.*, p. 246

after the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914."<sup>1</sup> How Pan-Pacific art is feeding back into the construction of a Pacific identity (and whether this is reproducing a more 'Pan-Pacific' identity) is not part of my brief here. The point of contrast, however, is that the 'Pacific identity' we see in discourses of history and culture is not usually framed as a 'Pan-Pacific' one (suggesting some sort of reification of 'Oceanic' discourses). This points to a recognition of the role of practice (albeit within certain cultural frameworks) in the construction of Pacific identity.

In the post-WWII period practice and discourse have frequently pointed to the importance attached to the idea of 'unity' in re-presenting the Pacific. An example is the preamble to the 1975 draft constitution for Micronesia which ringingly proclaimed: "to make one nation of many islands, we respect the diversity of our cultures. Our differences enrich us. The seas bring us together, they do not divide us . . . ."

In a recent book recalling his time as a journalist and later speech writer for the Congress of Micronesia, American writer P. F. Kluge recalls his work on this preamble to the draft Constitution: "My god, how they loved that preamble! They couldn't agree on lots of other things, but that preamble was a unanimous hit. Throughout the rest of the convention, they read that preamble aloud every day, first thing, like saying grace. In the end, only the Trukese, Yapese, and Kosraeans voted to accept the constitution. The Ponapeans voted against it. The Northern Marianas, Marshalls, and Palau went off to cut separate deals. That was the end of the Trust Territory of Pacific Islands. But everybody, the strayers and the stayers, loved that

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 262. Dark discusses Pan-Pacific art as a recent phenomena, but notes that Peter Gathercole [Pacific art historian] pointed out this example to him.

preamble. It went into schoolrooms, it was printed on T-shirts. . . . But was any of it true?"<sup>1</sup>

The Pacific Way has been described as "unity in diversity". Noting that there was no "convenient definition" of the Pacific Way, Salato observed: "Indeed the region *is* diverse, yet, at the same time, has a whole nexus of common traditions, common interests, common points-of-view - yes, a certain kind of unity."<sup>2</sup> This unity, according to Salato, is unity "in the face of the outside world", in "relation to outsiders."<sup>3</sup>

What is important to notice here is the pre-existing assumption of a distinction between 'insiders' and 'outsiders.' If it is the relationship with outsiders which produces this unified 'us', what boundary is that relationship across? And how does the practice of that relationship construct the distinction?

This notion of unity in the face of the 'Other' thus fails to point to what it is in the distinction (and the relationship) between identity and difference which constitutes the boundaries and the relationships across them. 'Unity in diversity' in fact calls upon other identity-making, boundary-making processes.

#### Beginnings in International Order: From 'Oceania' to 'South Pacific'

These 'beginnings' in 'Oceania' point to a number of matters which need to be kept in mind when talking about region and region-making - concerning explanation, authentication, and strategy. These beginnings in 'Oceania' also point to the interestedness of discourse, and the importance of

<sup>1</sup>Kluge, P. F. The Edge of Paradise: America in Micronesia (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Salato, op. cit., p. 31. Salato's interpretation is rephrased in Fairbairn et al. to suggest that unity "is *based on* a whole nexus of common traditions, interests and viewpoints." (Fairbairn et al., op. cit., p. 66). My emphasis.

<sup>3</sup>Salato, op. cit., p. 34.



the interpretation of context. The sense of 'indigenist awareness' produced by these discourses involves more than one boundary-making, identity-making process. This 'region' of Oceania is both a site of discourse and practice and a discourse informing other practices of region-making.

While these discourses of Oceania may be traced to beginnings in the encounter of the islands of the Pacific with first European, then international, systems of politics, economics, culture, etc., this is not sufficient to explain their 're-production' or 're-creation' as the 'South Pacific.'

To consider further *why* the South Pacific rather than fragmentation into more local, or expansion into more global boundaries, it is necessary to look at other discourses - of decolonisation, of development, of 'big-S' security - what I am calling here 'discourses of international order.'

Islanders' concern about losing 'their' region is put in terms of the South Pacific, not 'Oceania' in the sense of discourse used here. This suggests the link between culture and politics in region-making. Tracing the construction of the 'South Pacific' shows how discourses of international order have been interpreted through 'indigenist awareness' to reproduce political community.

In international relations, 'South Pacific' is a political rather than a geographic term - a site or an 'occasion'<sup>1</sup> of practice rather than a place.<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that its geographic characteristics have no bearing on its construction - but these are relational, as seen, for example, in its categorisation as 'Australia's back yard' - the meaning is in the relationship rather than in the geographic location.

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<sup>1</sup>I find the term 'occasion', borrowed from Denning (as above), gives an additional insight as it more completely encompasses the elements of time and place. As a metaphor, however, 'site' (with its theoretical baggage) is most apt.

<sup>2</sup>Compare this, for example, to the geographic 'South Atlantic.'

The construction of 'Oceania' and its subsequent 'division' into colonial territories set the stage for the construction of the 'South Pacific.' "It was in the aftermath of World War II that the South Pacific region first came to be considered by outsiders as an entity. . . ." <sup>1</sup> This region owes many of its beginnings to the establishment of, and the role played by, the South Pacific Commission. In establishing its 'territorial region' the SPC drew more on discourses of 'international order' than on those of a cultural Oceanic region. There were several strands to this: discourses of 'big-S' security in the post-war period, strongly influenced by Australian and New Zealand, and then later Cold War, concerns; discourses of decolonisation/nationalism; and discourses of development.

These discourses did not require that there actually be any cultural commonality among the territories. The commonality seen by the metropolitan powers was rather one of shared smallness, lack of development, and thus of weakness in the international system. Yet to the establishment of the SPC can be attributed the popularisation of the idea that 'regionalism' is a characteristic of the South Pacific. This connection, although at first promoted in terms of international order - regionalism to promote development, the creation of 'strong' states, and thus stability - came to draw on Oceanic discourses to produce a notion of the 'natural' regionalism of the South Pacific. The SPC thus had a major role in producing both 'region' (including creating it as a geographic entity whereby the South Pacific came to be seen as the territorial area of the SPC<sup>2</sup>), and 'regionalism.'

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<sup>1</sup>Salato, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Of those writing on the South Pacific who state what they mean by the 'region', most point to the territorial area of the SPC. Such nomination, where no discussion of the SPC itself is involved seems to be intended 1) to indicate the inclusion of the French territories as well as the independent and self-governing Pacific island states; and 2) to distinguish it from the broader Oceania which would include Hawaii and the Maori of New Zealand.

### The South Pacific Commission and Region-Making

The establishment of the South Pacific Commission in 1947 can be seen in some ways as the culmination of Australian and New Zealand efforts to carve off a region of their own. Such a Commission had been on their agenda since their 1944 meeting which concluded the ANZAC Pact. Their immediate interests then were concerns about their future security and fears that post-war decisions about the South Pacific would be made by the Allied leaders without them.

The idea of a 'Monroe Doctrine' for the region had a much longer history, however.<sup>1</sup> From the mid-19th century, Australasian interests in their neighbours included commercial interests (trade and investment), protection of settlers (including missionary pressures, especially from Victoria), as well as strategic interests. "The latter reason was particularly important."<sup>2</sup> Australian and New Zealand imperial ambitions in the 19th century took the form of calls for British annexation of parts of the island Pacific.

The Post-WWII Australasian belief that regional organisation was the best way to promote their security interests may be seen to proceed from earlier interests in regional cooperation among Europeans in the islands<sup>3</sup>, and existing cooperation among the territories of particular colonial powers, particularly that of the Western Pacific High Commission in the British

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<sup>1</sup>See, e.g. Thompson, Roger C. Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era 1820-1920 (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1980); Tate, Merze. "The Australasian Monroe Doctrine: Genesis of the Doctrine" Political Science Quarterly LXXVI (June 1961): 264-284.

<sup>2</sup>Fry, Greg, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>The Robson argument in Pacific Islands Monthly (PIM) is referred in Smith, T. R. South Pacific Commission: An Analysis after Twenty-Five Years (Wellington: Price Milburn for the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1972), p. 26. The general development of regional consciousness from PIM is discussed in Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 46.



territories. The WPHC legacy of trusteeship for the islands<sup>1</sup> and a real, if secondary, concern with native welfare<sup>2</sup> also influenced the Australian and New Zealand approach to regional organisation.

The Australia-New Zealand initiative was in keeping with post-WWII approaches to international affairs in several respects. The discussions which eventually led to the formation of the United Nations promoted a reinstitution of war-time cooperation as international organisation. Regionalism was also to be promoted, although the UN provisions on non-self-governing territories (Chapter XI) and international trusteeship (Chapter XII) foreclosed Australian ambitions<sup>3</sup> for an authoritative regional organisation which could direct and administer policy in the territories.

There was also a greater acceptance of the idea of the 'welfare state' - which could be writ internationally or regionally in areas like education and health. Such regionalism was to form part of the "post-war policy of 'welfare colonialism'."<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the post-WWII environment was seen as one in which there were international problems which required international solutions. As Fraser (NZ Prime Minister) noted in the Australia/New Zealand proposal of 1944: "the problems of native welfare so far transcend national boundaries as to call for international cooperation in their effective solution."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Although as Scarr points out, by the end of the first World War, the WPHC had moved to a preoccupation with economic development (and thus the involvement of settlers) in the islands, largely out of financial expediency. (Scarr, Deryck. Fragments of Empire: A History of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1877-1914 (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1967), chapter 10.

<sup>2</sup>Smith (*op. cit.*) gives greater emphasis to the welfare role than Fry (*op. cit.*).

<sup>3</sup>The SPC as established in 1947 had no administrative control; decisions about their dependent territories were still the prerogative of the metropolitan powers. Supervision remained with the UN.

<sup>4</sup>Crocombe, Ron. "South Pacific Regionalism" In Public Administration and Management in Small States: Pacific Experiences ed. Yash Ghai (London; Suva: The Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of the South Pacific, 1990), p. 230.

<sup>5</sup>Fraser, quoted in Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

More generally, however, the Australasian-inspired SPC can be seen as a product of the idea that here was something that could be thought of as 'their region'. The problem was how to manage it. As will be seen below, the concern with 'management' of the region is an on-going element in Australian (though less so in New Zealand) policy.

If 'hands off' may be said to have been a driving motive behind the SPC proposals of Australia and New Zealand, the post-war order was shortly to be one where larger contexts could not be ignored. There were two main dimensions to this. One was the issue of decolonisation, driven by the shake-up to colonial empires from World War II and by UN-style ideals promoting independence for former colonies. The other raised issues of alignment in the context of the Cold War. Thus, despite an international climate in favour of decolonisation, for the colonial powers in the South Pacific, the alignment issue was joined to doubts about the economic and political survivability of the 'small', 'weak' states that would be produced.

Discourses of decolonisation (with associated discourses of nationalism and development) and alignment took place in the context of more general discourses of international order. Central to these discourses of international order were assumptions about state sovereignty and the international system of states. The dominant view of security was one of "stasis and spatial exclusion."<sup>1</sup> This notion of security not only governed the U.S. approach to security generally, but was particularly relevant to U.S. determination to keep hostile powers out of the Pacific islands following its experience in the Pacific War. For reasons noted above, Australia and New

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<sup>1</sup>Dalby, Simon. *Rethinking Security: Ambiguities in Policy and Theory* (Burnaby, B.C.: Centre for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, 1991), p. 8. Dalby notes the influence of US-driven international relations theory (*Ibid.*, esp. p. 4-5).

Zealand were also happy with an exclusionary approach to security in the region.

These discourses of 'international order' (or of particular conceptions of international order) proceeded to 'site' the region in terms of its reading of the characteristics of the territories there. The promotion of region through the auspices of the SPC linked discourses of development with more traditional ('big-S') security concerns of the metropolitan powers. If strategic considerations were the "determining factors underlying the regional initiative", the "form and intended preoccupations" of the SPC were to be welfare and the promotion of economic development.<sup>1</sup>

The 'regional' approach taken by the SPC Commissioners was one of determining common problems and encouraging and administering research into areas of joint concern. 'Political dynamite' was to be avoided. Referring to his 1952 report to the SPC arguing that, to be effective, welfare and development efforts needed to include recapturing pride in the islanders own countries and heritage, Maude recalls: "It was the only time that I can remember when a proposal was unanimously turned down, virtually without discussion, by all six metropolitan powers."<sup>2</sup>

Talk of regionalism and/or regional cooperation continued despite gradual acceptance that economic circumstances and national interests would work against any sort of regional integration along European lines. An extra-regional focus on cooperative efforts in development areas was to prove more lasting, e.g. the efforts of PIPA, and the later Forum-negotiated SPARTECA Agreement, as was a focus on aid coordination.

Meanwhile the decolonisation process shifted the emphasis to the promotion of 'strong states' as a way of enhancing security. This notion of

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<sup>1</sup>Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 59. Fry notes that economic development was seen by some in the Australian government to offer two advantages to Australian defence: infrastructure, and goodwill (*Ibid.*, p. 57).

<sup>2</sup>Maude, *op. cit.*, p. 23.



strong states, as distinct from strong 'powers', referred to an internal strength based on domestic 'legitimacy'<sup>1</sup> - and included the economic development which would enable the new states to meet the aspirations of their populations.

Regionalism was to be part of the bridge between the old colonialism and the new (so far uncharted) independence - to promote stability in domestic affairs and loyalty to what was now represented as the 'West.'<sup>2</sup>

When these discourses of international order talked about developing the 'region' or protecting the 'region' they really talked first of all about the individual states. The sovereignty to be strengthened was the sovereignty of individual states. Economies of scale were to be promoted to improve national economies. This view of 'region' as an aggregation of states - but which was only as strong as its weakest link - can be seen in the way such discourses of international order were invoked in the 1980s debates about small state security.

#### Discourses of International Order: Small State Security

Traditionally island states like those in the Pacific have had their security situation discussed in terms of a presumed 'vulnerability' that comes from being both small and relatively isolated. This particular security situation intersects with their 'vulnerability' from their status as 'developing countries', as 'new states.'

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<sup>1</sup>Herr notes that until the Fiji coup the image of the South Pacific was one of strong states even if one of small powers. (Herr, Richard A. "Microstate Sovereignty in the South Pacific: Is Small Practical?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 10: 2 (Sept. 1988), p. 190).

<sup>2</sup>It is perhaps important to remember here that the South Pacific as constituted by the SPC has continued to include dependent territories, who are thus linked into the economic and security ('Big-S) structures of their mother countries. This has given France and the United States (although decreasingly) additional 'speaking positions' within the 'region.'

These characteristics are assumed to have implications regarding military, political, and economic security. Externally they are considered to be unable to defend themselves from attack. Internally there is worry that economic dependence or weak state structures will create 'political instability.' Small size and 'fragile' socio-political structures not only produce 'vulnerability' to external influences, but may actually 'invite' or be a 'magnet' for such intervention.<sup>1</sup>

A number of discourses about order in the international system came together in the aftermath of the Grenada intervention of 1983. A Commonwealth study of small states set up following Grenada expressed the standard case for 'small is vulnerable':

A small state is, therefore, inherently vulnerable largely because it can be seen as a potentially easy victim for external aggression in all its guises. It is true there have been only a few instances to date of a small state being subjected to military attack or invasion. But, there have been some and this underscores their essential vulnerability to territorial incursions, especially since these may be mounted not only by government forces but by mercenaries in the pay of governments or, for that matter, of externally based groups. In terms of actual experience, the majority of small states have, in fact, been subject more often to non-military aggression. Indeed, their very smallness can be said to have acted almost as a positive incentive, attracting efforts to interfere and exploit, which may be initiated by an alarmingly wide variety of private sources, from multinationals to the media, as well as by other states."<sup>2</sup>

Another study prompted by the Falklands and Grenada cases noted that the "particular vulnerability of very small states to external attack and internal destabilisation" posed problems not only for such states themselves

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<sup>1</sup>E.g. "In certain circumstances (though not all) an unstable state acts as a magnet, drawing external players, often with no intrinsic interest, into the arena and provides opportunities for meddling." (Hegarty, David "Security Developments in the Southwest Pacific" In *Australia and the World: Prologue and Prospects*, ed. Desmond Ball (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies, ANU, 1990), p. 295.

<sup>2</sup>Commonwealth Consultative Group. *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985), p.15.

but also for the "international community". Its conclusion was that "small is dangerous."<sup>1</sup>

The 'essential' significance of smallness is hard to determine in most of the discussions which see it as a problem for security, even where an attempt is made to consider the bases of its definition.<sup>2</sup> The question of whether small states define their security problems differently, and if so, which ones, is bypassed. Rather the assumption seems to be that they perceive threats to their security in the same way as larger or more powerful states but because they are small they feel even more threatened. Although it is possible that 'micro-states' in fact give a completely different meaning to what it means to be a state, they are rather discussed in terms of their 'viability' measured against conventional criteria of statehood. "The assumption behind the small state-as-a-problem approach, whether explicit or tacit, is that of realism: in an anarchical world of power-maximising autonomous actors, how can the small state remain viable."<sup>3</sup>

Consequently it is assumed that such small vulnerable entities will want to 'improve' their viability against these criteria. In Buzan's analysis: "insecurity reflects a combination of threats and vulnerabilities," and although the "two cannot be meaningfully separated".... "the distinction between threats and vulnerabilities points to a key divide in security policy, namely that units can seek to reduce their insecurity either by reducing their vulnerabilities or by preventing or lessening threats."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Harden, Sheila, ed. Small is Dangerous: Micro States in a Macro World [Report of a Study Group of the David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies] (London: Frances Pinter, 1985), p. vii and passim.

<sup>2</sup>E.g. Wiberg who notes the use of two main types of definition - the absolute (using indicators of size), and the relational (which suggests that 'smallness' lies in lack of influence and/or high sensitivity to the environment. (Wiberg, Hakan. "The Security of Small Nations: Challenges and Defences" Journal of Peace Research 24:4 (1987), p.339).

<sup>3</sup>Thakur, Ramesh. Australia, New Zealand, and Small States in World Order (Canberra: [Conference paper for] New Directions in International Relations: Implications for Australasia, Dept. of International Relations, ANU, 1989), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Buzan, op. cit., p.73.



Vulnerabilities, seen largely in terms of internal factors, are thus something that even small states can do something about, although they might be more limited in terms of what they can do about threats.

The notion of 'microstate' vulnerability may be seen to have a particular resonance in the context of the substantial number of non-Western such states entering the system following decolonisation.<sup>1</sup> After all, European 'microstates' such as Monaco, Andorra, the Vatican City, and the Channel Islands, had a long history of employing their 'comparative advantage' in attracting aid and concessions.<sup>2</sup> These states managed to circumscribe their affairs without it being seen as detrimental to their sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> As decolonisation began to produce a number of new 'microstates' doubts about what such a large number of sovereignly equal but comparatively weak states would do to the international system was combined with doubts about what these particular states could handle.<sup>4</sup>

Something of this resonance could be seen in interpretations of the Santo rebellion of 1980. "What had begun as a local movement of cargo-cultists had, with the support of the pro-French parties, and the financing of shady business interests, quickly escalated into a serious political crisis that threatened the existence of a nation. A perfect illustration of the fragile security of the microstates."<sup>5</sup> The potential dangers from islanders'

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<sup>1</sup>I don't find 'racial' a very useful independent variable for explanation, but some element of what is usually meant by this would seem to have been included.

<sup>2</sup>Connell, John. *Sovereignty & Survival: Island Microstates in the Third World*. (Sydney: Department of Geography, University of Sydney, 1988), p.86.

<sup>3</sup>Boyce, Peter J. and Richard A. Herr. "Microstate Diplomacy in the South Pacific" *Australian Outlook* Vol 28: 1 (April 1974), p. 27. Boyce and Herr refer to the "obfuscation of the line between independence and dependence in a manner reminiscent of the European microstates (Liechtenstein, San Marino and Monaco)."

<sup>4</sup>It is in this context that we can see the comparative focus on the Caribbean and South Pacific microstates.

<sup>5</sup>King, Warren. "Security Issues for the South Pacific Microstates" *World Review* 29:4 (Dec 1990), p. 19.

susceptibility to outside meddling could at least in this instance be put to the unusual exigencies of completing the decolonisation process in Vanuatu.

The impact of the Grenada intervention (1983) on re-interpreting microstate security in the South Pacific was barely underway when it was conjoined to what was widely perceived as a mid-80s crisis period, involving the ANZUS shake-up, troubles in New Caledonia, and Western worries about an increased Soviet and Libyan interest and presence in the Pacific.<sup>1</sup>

What has been called the 'Fiji effect' following the 1987 coups "gave rise not only to fresh external interest in the region, but also to a line of analysis which emphasized its growing political instability." This saw "attention eagerly focused on signs of political unease in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Vanuatu . . . and scenarios involving the overthrow of existing regimes by various means were soon envisaged or invented."<sup>2</sup> Analysts referred to a "trend to political turbulence in the South Pacific by the late 1980s."<sup>3</sup> Rather than seeing them as unusual, contingent, particular events with their own histories, these conflicts were presented as 'characterising' the region.

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<sup>1</sup>This followed a period of perceived threats to strategic denial in the mid-70s. Generally, Australia considered it had successfully managed these threats by up-grading island relations. For a discussion of how the new thinking about microstate security following Grenada affected the interpretation of political developments in the South Pacific, see Fry, Greg. Peacekeeping in the South Pacific: Some Questions for Prior Consideration (Canberra: Department of International Relations, ANU, 1990), esp. p. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup>Payne, Anthony "The Fiji Effect: A Review of Trends in South Pacific Politics" The Round Table No. 312 (Oct. 1989), p. 440. Payne's conclusion was that: "the 'Fiji effect' is certainly there, but it is not to be understood as a model of what is to come in any serious or precise sense. It is more accurately a signpost, bearing a message which says to the South Pacific: 'Welcome to the Third World!'" (*Ibid.*, p. 446).

<sup>3</sup>Hegarty, David "Security Developments in the Southwest Pacific" In Australia and the World: Prologue and Prospects, ed. Desmond Ball (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1990), p. 295.

## Discourses of International Order: Sovereignty, Strategic Denial and Security Complexes

These '80s debates about small state security pointed anew to the concern with developing 'strong states' in the interests of international order, and to the role of development in this. At a Commonwealth Secretariat colloquium in Wellington in 1984, islanders had assessed their greatest security threat as coming from their economic vulnerability.

At the time this was remarked upon as demonstrating that islanders saw their security 'differently.' The idea that security could be seen as having 'dimensions' - adding notions of 'economic security', or 'environmental security' to the traditional military model - was becoming more generally popular; here was an example of focusing on the economic dimension.

In fact this emphasis on the potential threat to their sovereignty from economic dependence had a history in more than one regional discourse. On the one hand, this was a large part of the (stated) basis on which the metropolitan powers promoted regionalism - the promotion of economic development through economic cooperation to promote stability. On the other hand, for the newly independent island states a reference to 'region' was seen to serve as some protection from the neo-colonialism (or at least the obvious appearance of such) of former metropolitan powers. As such 'the region' worked in some ways as an alternative to the attractions of other Third World groupings, e.g. the Non-Aligned Movement (of which only Vanuatu was ever a member).<sup>1</sup>

It has been common to analyse this emphasis on economic security in terms of its necessity for the protection of sovereignty. "The overriding

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<sup>1</sup>In promoting a Third World counter grouping, the Non-Aligned Movement was concerned with development as well as alignment issues. Although island leaders like Ratu Mara have maintained a high profile in Third World fora, "the island states do not perceive themselves as being part of a homogeneous 'Third World'." (Boyce and Herr, *op. cit.*, p. 25).



consideration. . . is the widely held belief that the greatest danger to the free exercise of sovereignty by the small states arises less from direct external intervention than from economic vulnerability."<sup>1</sup> This makes certain assumptions about the meaning of sovereignty and economic viability which will be taken up below.

Another view is that economic security is prominent because the South Pacific is already a security 'community'<sup>2</sup> and can afford to give a low priority to 'big-S' security issues. And there is no major external threat perception.

The South Pacific 'region' constructed by the establishment of the SPC may be seen to have held inherent in it the ANZUS region of 'strategic denial' which followed.<sup>3</sup> Strategic denial was a variant on the ideas of 'spatial exclusion' which informed discourses of international order in the post-WWII period. 'Trespassing' in the region would be prevented through controlling access. Except over the nuclear issue, this has meant a relatively easy side-lining of the strategic questions. Of course, what constitutes trespass depends on what the 'region' is. Nevertheless the notion of 'controlling access' as a means of handling threat - seen e.g. in many of the

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<sup>1</sup>Herr, R. A. "Regionalism, Strategic Denial and South Pacific Security" *Journal of Pacific History* XXI No. 4 (Oct. 1986), p. 171. This was the conclusion of an Australian government report as well. "Economic security is predominant in the concerns of the region, reflecting their awareness of the fragility of their economies and vulnerability to outside influences. Economic security is closely linked with political stability, and the very survival of a number of the smaller states as independent, sovereign states." (Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. *Australia's Relations with the South Pacific* (Canberra: AGPS, 1989), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>In the sense that "...the region already constitutes what Karl Deutsch has called a 'security community'; that is, no member state in the region is likely to commit aggression or willingly permit its territory to be used for aggression on another regional state." (*Ibid.*, p. 173; Herr's reference is to Deutsch, Karl W. et al. *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton, 1957).

<sup>3</sup>Herr has argued that the major way in which the Pacific island states have handled the issue of strategic threat has been by accepting the umbrella of 'strategic denial.' It is possible to see this as making a virtue out of necessity. But, as Herr also points out, the islands "have appreciated that serious Great Power rivalry in the region would pose a direct threat to their exercise of sovereignty. . . . Indeed arguably [the islander view] has made the ANZUS policy of strategic denial possible." (Herr, R. A. "Diplomacy and Security in the South Pacific: Coping with Sovereignty" *Current Affairs Bulletin* 63: 8 (Jan 1987), p. 20).

environmental concerns - owes much to the 'stasis and spatial exclusion' discourses which established the SPC region.

Buzan's 'security complex' has been one attempt to construct a framework for considering regional security.<sup>1</sup> Buzan's approach is to focus on the idea of region in terms of security relations: "In security terms, 'region' means that a distinct and significant subsystem of security relations exists among a set of states whose fate is that they have been locked into geographical proximity with each other."<sup>2</sup> In addition to power relations, Buzan adds what he calls the "pattern of amity and enmity."<sup>3</sup> These are not only or necessarily a result of any balance of power but have a "historical dynamic"; they "could not be predicted from a simple consideration of the distribution of power."<sup>4</sup> A "security complex" is thus defined as "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another."<sup>5</sup>

Buzan suggests that the South Pacific may 'arguably' be seen as a security complex: "the South Pacific Forum binds Australia, New Zealand and many of the small island states into a loose security community."<sup>6</sup> On the other hand he describes the relationship between Australia and Indonesia as one of weak interdependencies and thus constitutes a weak security complex.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Buzan, Barry. People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era. 2d. ed. (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), chapter 5. In this volume Buzan has updated his earlier work on this topic, although he draws on ideas in the first edition of this title (1983), and more particularly on the analysis of regional security in Buzan, Barry and Gowher Rizvi et al. South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers (London: Macmillan, 1986)..

<sup>2</sup>Buzan, People, States and Fear, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 192. Perhaps he is unaware that Australia carries out regular defence 'games' against an 'imaginary' enemy from the North/North-west! Or of the security concerns

Buzan's analysis suggests a way to side-step the two customary ways of talking about 'regional security' as the security of a region : (1) as its security against outsiders, and (2) as an internal 'security community' (in the sense as above). In his framework regional security is focused inwards *because* these are the links which dominate, thus 'insulating' the region somewhat from patterns of security relations with 'outsiders', although major outside powers have also to be accommodated. "A security complex exists where a set of security relationships stands out from the general background by virtue of its relatively strong, inward-looking character, and the relative weakness of its outward security interactions with its neighbours."<sup>1</sup>

While pointing to the "historical dynamic" of security relations, however, Buzan fails to examine the boundary-making processes through which *meaning* produces 'place' or site of security relations. This is not only because he holds more to the assumption that place (geography) gives meaning, but he largely takes for granted both existing state boundaries and what they mean in security terms.<sup>2</sup> This follows from his overall approach to security which relies on a 'levels of analysis' (individual, state, international) framework and systems thinking. His analysis thus fails to query the underlying assumptions about political community.

On the other hand, it is just such assumptions on which Walker focuses his interrogations of the security concept. Walker suggests re-addressing the

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linking Australia-PNG-Indonesia. For a discussion of the PNG-Indonesia border issue and Australia's relations with both countries, see Bullock, Katherine. Australia and Papua New Guinea: Foreign and Defence Relations Since 1975 (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1991).

<sup>1</sup>Buzan, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>2</sup>Referring to the first edition of Buzan's book, Walker noted how his discussion of security both opened and closed a re-thinking of security. So in my view, he does here with his discussion of region. See Walker, R. B. J. The Concept of Security and International Relations Theory (San Diego: University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, 1988), pp. 3-7.



security question in terms of 'whose security.'<sup>1</sup> He considers that "the most important characteristic of the concept of security is neither that it is 'essentially contested' nor that it is 'silent', but that it is derivative from and dependent upon an historically specific conception of political community."<sup>2</sup> This notion that security must be seen in terms of the security of someone not only re-focuses the security question on 'whose' security, but suggests an interest in how that 'who' came to be constructed.

The relationship between sovereignty and political community and its resolution in the state is an historical 'accident'. Identity-making practices such as region-making suggest a reinterpretation of the way political community is resolved. This, however, is not what is generally meant by calls for enhancing sovereignty through regionalism.

It has been argued that the primary purpose of regionalism in the South Pacific is the protection of sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> The post-Grenada recommendations called for enhancing the sovereignty of small states through regional measures in order to promote stability and international order. Although framed in terms of protecting state *sovereignty*, these recommendations were really about preserving states - with 'sovereignty' only an unproblematised 'black box.' Concerning 'regional security' this argument can be summed up as: preserve each *state*, preserve the region.

Thus much of the literature on 'regional security' is really about somebody's foreign policy, or increasingly, somebody's domestic policy which is seen as a threat, or alternatively, as a safeguard, in some way.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>It is not my purpose here to survey the literature on re-thinking the security question. For a useful, well-referenced overview of these efforts see Dalby, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup>Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>E.g. Herr, R. A. "Regionalism, Strategic Denial and South Pacific Security", *op. cit.* This theme forms a continuing thread in Herr's work on South Pacific regionalism.

<sup>4</sup>My examination of the 'Big R-Big S' literature on the South Pacific suggests that it is one or more of the following which is really being discussed: the *foreign policy*: (1) of particular island states towards other island states; (2) of particular island states towards Australia and/or New Zealand; (3) of particular island states towards states outside the 'region'; (4) of the island states acting together towards Australia/New Zealand; (5) of the island states

It is in this context that notions of 'weak links' were discussed, e.g. the view that Vanuatu was the 'weak link' in ANZUS' policy of 'strategic denial'.

Such discussion about regional security conflates any distinction between security *of* the region, and security *in* the region. Or to put it in terms of threats - that threats *in* the region are threats *to* the region. This is, of course, the logic of 'strategic denial' but this military model now appears to be more broadly applied under a 'stability' umbrella.

### Discourses of International Order: Stability and Managing Change

I have referred above to the discourses of international order brought into play in the construction of the 'South Pacific', and the way in which order - seen in terms of stability and spatial exclusion - was considered to be promoted through regionalism. For the metropolitan powers regionalism was a way of 'managing change' and preserving the 'central balance' through 'sensible' decolonisation and maintaining alignment. The notions of managing change and preserving stability have by now taken on a life of their own - despite changes in both local and international environments.

Leaver has noted how through the "central balance logic", in Australian foreign policy "the goal of stability has tended to become the functional equivalent of peace." Thus, despite the changes in the global security

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acting together towards states outside the 'region'; (6) of the island states plus Australia/New Zealand acting together towards states outside the 'region'; (7) of Australia and/or New Zealand acting towards the island states as a group (foreign policy towards the 'region'); (8) of Australia and/or New Zealand acting together towards particular island states; (9) of states outside the 'region' acting towards the island states as a group; (10) of states outside the 'region' acting towards particular island states; (11) of states outside the 'region' acting towards the island states plus Australia/New Zealand; or the *domestic* policy (1) of particular island states and its effects on internal 'stability'; (2) of Australia and/or New Zealand and its effects on external perceptions.

environment, a focus on 'stability' in the 'region' remains the core value of Australia's regional policy, as evidenced in the 1989 Evans Statement.<sup>1</sup>

Another long-time analyst of South Pacific affairs has recently noted that "by the end of the decade the balance of factors that go to make up the region's security outlook were shifting from those relating to external power interests to those concerned with internal security and stability."<sup>2</sup>

"While not often openly expressed, the new-found concern for the domestic aspects of the South Pacific microstates' sovereignty has been prompted by the frustration and impotence felt by many in Australia and New Zealand that effective intervention in Fiji to support the lawful government of deposed Prime Minister Timoci Bavadra could not be found. Exposure of the constraints on those regional hegemonies in dealing with internal crises in their neighbouring microstates has tended to elevate levels of anxiety over the prospects for such instability both within Australia and New Zealand and in the extra-regional countries which have tended to rely on them as the South Pacific power brokers."<sup>3</sup>

In 1987 Fiji was regarded in Australia and elsewhere as having 'failed' the stability test. This 'failure' took place in a context in which many had believed that there was a "natural affinity between constitutionalism and the Pacific way."<sup>4</sup> The new interest in regional stability was read back into

<sup>1</sup>Leaver, Richard. "'The Shock of the New' and the Habits of the Past" In Australia's Regional Security, edited by Greg Fry (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), esp. p. 38. Leaver's paper argues that the changes in the global environment pointed to in the statement are not followed logically by a change to this central balance logic in regional policy as put forward in the Statement. See Evans, Gareth. Australia's Regional Security: Ministerial Statement (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1989).

<sup>2</sup>Hegarty, David. "External Powers in the South Pacific" In South Pacific Security: Issues and Perspectives, ed. Steven Henningham and Desmond Ball (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1991), p. 92.

<sup>3</sup>Herr, Richard A. "Microstate Sovereignty in the South Pacific: Is Small Practical?", *op. cit.*, p. 190-191.

<sup>4</sup>Ghai, Yash. "Constitutional Foundations of Public Administration" In Public Administration and Management in Small States: Pacific Experiences, ed. Yash Ghai (London; Suva: The Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of the South Pacific, 1990), p. 3.



domestic political processes to suggest that peaceful political succession in island states was a test for the region.<sup>1</sup> But did island leaders see this as a test of anything? Reactions rather ranged from warnings about external threats to Fiji's sovereignty<sup>2</sup> to approval of the goal, if not the means of the assertion of indigenous nationalism.<sup>3</sup> They did not suggest that the region itself was threatened, although intervention by Australia or New Zealand would have been considered a serious breach of regional trust. This connection between democratic change and producing a 'positive' regional security environment was pursued in the Evans Statement of December 1989. But, as Fry has pointed out, the basis for making such a connection is not set out. "Why is democratic change seen as promoting regional, and Australian, security? There are obviously other reasons why Australians would want to support democratic values but it is not evident why or how this relates to the security objective. . . . The case for seeing a link between the two needed to be made in the Statement; instead it was simply left as an assertion."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This was true even of those who were careful to note how few such 'failures' there were, e. g. Ross who notes the one failure (Fiji) "out of approximately 96 possible occasions when peaceful and successful succession was tested." (Ross, Ken. Prospects for Crisis Prediction: A South Pacific Case Study (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1990), p. 55. The re-reading of the literature on constitutionalism in the South Pacific by those interested in 'regional stability' is an example of how these discourses of international order are re-interpreting the relationship between the 'region' and the internal affairs of island states.

<sup>2</sup>The Joint PNG/Solomon Islands/Vanuatu statement read: "We will not hesitate to take appropriate diplomatic action to deal with external threats to Fiji's sovereignty from where ever they might come. Fiji's problems should, where possible, be dealt with in Fiji." (cited in The Canberra Times, 21 May, 1987).

<sup>3</sup>This was recognised by Australia as a "significant constraint" to Australia's policy on the Fiji situation: "Very few appreciated, let alone applauded, the military means by which Fiji's indigenous nationalism asserted itself; but anyone who believes the political end thus achieved was itself perceived as wholly unacceptable, has not spent much time with an ear to the ground in the Pacific. . . it would be self-defeating to ride roughshod over that kind of reaction." (Evans, Gareth. "Australia's Place in the World: The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Decision-Making" In Australia and the World: Prologue and Prospects, ed. Desmond Ball (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1990), p. 328).

<sup>4</sup>Fry, Greg. "'Constructive Commitment' with the South Pacific: Monroe Doctrine or New 'Partnership'?" In Australia's Regional Security, ed. Greg Fry (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), p.134.

This interest in 'management', in 'stability' on the part of the metropolitan powers, and particularly on the part of its major regional power, Australia, often seems to be quite separate from any indication of what it is *for*. Rather the notion that 'the region' is more complex and changeable seems to offer its own imperative for 'managing change.'<sup>1</sup>

Recently these discussions have suggested a link between 'multi-dimensionality', change, and management.<sup>2</sup> Although the concept of 'dimensions' of security has by now well and truly been brought into most discussion of security, this has meant that the notion of region to be secured is no longer 'obvious'. Australia may have operated as a 'gate-keeper' to a region it saw as characterised by 'strategic denial', but how to gate-keep an economic or ecological security 'region'?<sup>3</sup> In fact, how are the boundaries of such a region to be seen?

Such concern with management and with internal affairs of states in the region may be a better pointer to changing Australian views about the region and region-making, than government pronouncements on 'regional security.' For example, a lessened interest in the SPC- or Forum-constructed regions, particularly in the face of a developing Asia-Pacific region, but a continuing concern with 'neighbours' (a word which also appears to have

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<sup>1</sup>This may perhaps also be contexted in terms of developments in international relations theory. Walker has noted that "the reinvigoration of political realism has been accompanied by a renewed concern with the analysis of change in international politics." (Walker, R. B. J. "Realism, Change, and International Political Theory" International Studies Quarterly 31 (1987), pp. 65-86.

<sup>2</sup>E.g. Ball, Desmond, ed. Australia and the World: Prologue and Prospects (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1990); Henningham, Stephen and Desmond Ball, eds. South Pacific Security: Issues and Perspectives (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1991). The presentation of Australia's interests as "multidimensional" by Gareth Evans has been one strand of these discussions. See e.g. Evans, op. cit., esp. pp. 324, 332.

<sup>3</sup>The push to reconceptualising security has not only suggested the re-thinking of sovereignty, of course, but has also been used to update the concept of national security by including economic and ecological threats to the state. Ball points to a number of potential conflicts from economic and environmental security issues (Ball, Desmond. "The Changing Asia/Pacific Security Environment and the South Pacific" In South Pacific Security: Issues and Perspectives, ed. Stephen Henningham and Desmond Ball (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1991), p. 7-8.



new-found popularity). It is in this context that one may perhaps read the conclusions of a recent Australian parliamentary inquiry into relations with Papua New Guinea. The Joint Committee found that the Bougainville crisis had produced "a shift in perception . . . as to what constitutes a security threat to the region" but went on to point to the "strategic importance to Australia" of the "stability and integrity of Papua New Guinea."<sup>1</sup>

The original premises of post-WWII regionalism in the Pacific suggested that regionalism or regional cooperation was a way to reduce national vulnerabilities. This would provide collective strength vis-a-vis outsiders and strengthen internal, especially economic, characteristics. This view may be put as 'region-making for strong states'. In its new guise, regional security is focused on managing change through concern for internal threats. This view may be put as 'strong states for a strong region'; or more usually - negatively - threats to states are threats to the region. This shift has more implications than might be first apparent, but the notion of the regional read nationally, rather than the national read regionally suggests a new framing for region-making.

### Different Regions for Different Occasions

I noted above the familiar argument that the purpose of regionalism in the South Pacific has been the protection of sovereignty. In fact, however, it needs to be kept in mind that although 'regionalism' may protect state sovereignty, *it also protects 'region.'* I would suggest that rather than seeing this as the protection of an aggregation of states it points to the way in which some idea of region-making is part of nation-making (and other identity-

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<sup>1</sup>Garrett, Jemima. "A Change in Relations, but for the Best?" Pacific Islands Monthly 62:2 (Feb. 1992), p. 22. Garrett quotes from the report of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. Australia's Relations with Papua New Guinea.



making). That is to say, that notions of 'indigenouness' which are bounded 'regionally' or sub-regionally' are part of the 'national'; that some idea of region-making is part of 'national security.'

In the post WWII period, an important factor has been the growing up together of 'national' independence, and 'regional' independence. If the metropolitan powers which created the SPC may be said to have had a consciousness of the coming international system in which there would be a large number of new - including many small - states, the leaders bringing those colonies to independence were conscious of it too. By the 1960s leaders of the approaching independent (and self-governing) states in the South Pacific had operated in a context of their own nationalisms, an interpretation of global context, and an SPC-derived notion of region consisting of the existing regional structures and the promotion of a regional approach. These developments took place in the context of wider discourses of identity-making which linked the constructions of regional and national identities.

In this joint construction of regional and national identities - in the formation of political communities - Pacific islanders have re-addressed and challenged traditional notions of sovereignty. One example is the status of the free-association states and the issue of sovereignty. Within both the SPC and the Forum these states are treated as regional equals in terms of speaking rights. Recognised as sovereign, they are, thus, 'sovereign' in the region. This has implications for the meaning content of sovereignty - perhaps "viability" as the "capacity. . . to meet the expectations of the people"<sup>1</sup> - rather than meeting some objective criteria of statehood. This South Pacific approach to 'sovereignty' suggests a recognition of the

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<sup>1</sup>Macdonald, Barrie. "Decolonization and Beyond: the Framework for Post-Colonial Relationships in Oceania" *Journal of Pacific History* XXI No. 3 (July 1986), p. 118. In his context, Macdonald's phrase was used to refer to economic viability as distinguished from economic development.

alternative suggested by Thakur - "that small state behaviour is qualitatively different, with its own characteristic mode of functioning and techniques of statecraft."<sup>1</sup> The existence of MIRAB economies, for example, suggests an alternative approach to 'development' for people, focusing on maintaining island culture and society.<sup>2</sup>

More generally sovereignty in the South Pacific (to Pacific islanders) has been seen less in terms of the 'resolution of universality and particularity'<sup>3</sup> in one political community - the state - than in terms of trying to do things in an independent way, in an 'own' way - and this sense of 'own' is bounded by regional as well as other local or national identity-making processes.<sup>4</sup>

It is also bounded by more than one 'region.' The 'South Pacific' which has been constructed through discourses of 'Oceania' and order has also been constructed 'differently for different occasions.' One major distinction is between the 'SPC-region' and the 'Forum-region', not just because they have different members and geography but because they point to differing identity- and boundary-making.

The 'region' defined by the territorial area of the South Pacific Commission, including both independent states and dependent territories probably most closely matches the common perception of the Pacific as the Pacific islands. This is not the same as the 'Oceanic' region - the 'region' of Pacific Islanders (Polynesians, Melanesians, Micronesians) which also includes Hawaii, Irian Jaya, and the New Zealand Maori.

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<sup>1</sup>Thakur, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ogden, Michael R. "The Paradox of Pacific Development" *Development Policy Review* Vol. 7 (1989);, p. 371. Ogden argues that the MIRAB economies are "capable of maintaining themselves indefinitely - that is, that the transnationalization of kinship-corporations, the perpetually 'topped up' flow of remittances, and the continued availability of oda are all sustainable." (*Ibid.*, p. 370-371).

<sup>3</sup>The phrase is from Walker (Walker, *Security Sovereignty and the Challenge of World Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 8).

<sup>4</sup>There are, of course, other 'international' boundary-making processes going on as well.

An alternative way of looking at "Oceanic regionalism" has been suggested by Crocombe. Taking 'Oceania' as that term is defined by United Nations agencies, i.e. Australia, Polynesia (which includes New Zealand), Melanesia and Micronesia, he considers that an "Oceanic regionalism" began with the establishment of the South Pacific Forum.<sup>1</sup> This notion of 'Oceanic regionalism' points to the crucial role of Australia, and to a lesser extent New Zealand, in constructing what region we are talking about. Australia's (and to a lesser extent New Zealand's) inclusion 'in region' immediately shifts attention to those discourses of international order, rather than of 'Oceania'. Forum regionalism thus participates in regional discourses generated by the SPC-region over what the region is/means.

An example of the way in which discourses of 'different regions' are called upon may be seen in considering how to view ANZUS. Is ANZUS a regional organisation (or even, a regional security organisation)? Most would say 'no', on the basis that most of the region is not a member; some would say that it has no 'regional' members (only metropolitans). But is ANZUS concerned with 'regional security'? Many, if not all, would say yes. ANZUS is concerned with the 'security' of the 'region' as it has been constructed by the SPC in terms of territory and interests. And there is also the argument that in accepting - by not repudiating - 'strategic denial' island states have recognised this 'region.' I suggest that this points to 'different regions for different occasions.'

Despite its Forum role, many in the Pacific (including Australians as well as Islanders) would have difficulty seeing Australia as other than a

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<sup>1</sup>Crocombe, "South Pacific Regionalism", *op. cit.*, p. 230. In practice, he notes, Hawaii, Irian Jaya and Easter Island are usually excluded. The problem, of course, with this is that the Forum is more exclusive than the UN-designated 'Oceania', although, it can be argued that it sees its area of concern in this way.



metropolitan power.<sup>1</sup> In addition to Australia's role in the SPC, it plays the role of the major 'regional power.' Australia's two 'speaking positions' vis-a-vis the South Pacific thus allow it to speak of its policy towards 'the region', and to talk about the 'other regional states.'<sup>2</sup> This situation is compounded by the fact that by far the most extensive discussions of 'regional security' are produced in Australia by academics and government departments. One factor is whether they are looking inward or outward. The South Pacific is 'our region' but, e.g. "we' provide aid to 'the region' - i.e. to them. This slippage is further complicated by 'our' larger (Pacific Rim, Pacific Basin, or Asia-Pacific) region.

In 1971, the South Pacific Forum was established as, and is widely recognised as, the *premier* organisation of the independent states of the 'region.'<sup>3</sup> As was noted above, this followed successful efforts by island leaders to take 'control' of the South Pacific Commission, which, however, retained its metropolitan members and its non-political mandate. Nevertheless island states have continued a commitment to the SPC, despite the establishment of the South Pacific Forum.

I suggest that this is because the South Pacific Commission and the South Pacific Forum present very different sites of practice; that they offer 'different regions' for 'different occasions'. Thus, although they have many members in common, it is hardly surprising that there has been such debate over a Single Regional Organisation. The establishment of the South Pacific

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<sup>1</sup>At the time of the establishment of the Forum, it was Ratu Mara who was determined to have Australia included, over objections from other regional states. A range of motives would seem to be apparent - from seeking a sponsor to hoping to co-opt Australia by linking it to 'regional' decisions.

<sup>2</sup>E.g. Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. *Australia's Relations with the South Pacific*, *op. cit.*; Evans, *Australia's Regional Security: Ministerial Statement*, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup>The Forum presently has 15 members: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa.

Organizations Co-ordinating Committee (SPOCC) may have established the Forum as the 'hub' of regional affairs, however, it has not eliminated interest in the alternative site of practice provided by the SPC.

The SPC may be seen as a 'region' constituted by 'interests.' In its establishment it was a region of 'Western interests' in the broad sense. In more recent times other 'external' powers with interests in the Pacific - notably Japan - have expressed interest in membership. Although to date, these have been turned down, 'interests' as a qualification for membership has not been entirely ruled out.

Rather the potential gains (e.g. in aid) are weighed against the risks of adding external powers, particularly Japan, to the mix. 'Control' of the SPC, as we have seen above, rests on a particular historical understanding; 'outsiders' might see a different relationship between funding and control. Japan's long-standing interest in membership has thus so far been fended off. As a relatively new participant in regional affairs, Japan may also be seen as having made its security commitments in another context which might hinder its flexibility in accommodating regional views. Mediansky has noted that Japan "does not appear comfortable with the anti-nuclear orientations of the region," and referred to the warning in Fiji in 1987 by the Japanese Foreign Minister on giving thought to global security considerations.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese response to regional concerns on fishing and environmental matters have also made it suspect for some Pacific islanders.

The interest of 'Pacific' states such as Japan in membership of South Pacific organisations raises particular questions about other 'Pacific' boundary-making and the relationship between the South Pacific and the

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<sup>1</sup>Mediansky, F. A. "Australia and the Southwest Pacific" In In Pursuit of National Interests: Australian Foreign Policy in the 1990s, ed. F. A. Mediansky and A. C. Palfreeman (Sydney: Pergamon, 1988), p. 217.

Asia-Pacific region.<sup>1</sup> The 'legitimacy' of historical interests in claiming a right to membership of the region is based in part on the perception that these metropolitan powers see it *as* a region - one which the islands want to preserve.

The concern over new powers with interests in the Pacific is 'will they see it *has to be* a region, like Australia and New Zealand do/did.' Of course, also of concern at the moment may be the question of whether Australia and New Zealand still see it has to be a region.

In the 1980s both Australia and New Zealand reviewed their relations with the region, producing plans for, respectively, 'constructive commitment'<sup>2</sup> and 'Pacific Community'.<sup>3</sup> It perhaps remains to be seen whether what has been presented as a renewed focus on 'partnership' with 'their immediate region' will turn out to be an anomaly caused by the exigencies of the mid-80s shake-up to international affairs. In New Zealand a change of government in 1990 resulted in a new Defence policy moving away from the intensely regional outlook of the previous (1987) Defence White Paper. "What characterizes the 1991 review is its critical look at the assumptions of South Pacific defence policy focus, and the extent to which it should be allowed to dictate policy. . . . The South Pacific States are viewed as

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<sup>1</sup>Chile is the only South American rim state to so far express an interest. It has, of course, the Easter Island connection.

<sup>2</sup>For a description of constructive commitment as a policy framework for Australia's relations with the South Pacific, see Evans, *Australia's Regional Security: Ministerial Statement, op. cit.*, p. 45. 'Constructive commitment' had earlier been presented as the government's approach to regional affairs in Evans' speech to the Foreign Correspondents' Association in September 1988. For the text of this speech see Evans, Gareth. "Australia in the South Pacific" *World Review: A Journal of Contemporary Relevance* Vol. 28:2 (June 1989), pp. 4-10. For a discussion of constructive commitment which examines the extent to which it is a departure from or a continuation of previous Australian policy, see Fry, Greg. "'Constructive Commitment' with the South Pacific: Monroe Doctrine or New 'Partnership'?" In *Australia's Regional Security*, ed. Greg Fry (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), pp. 120-137.

<sup>3</sup>South Pacific Policy Review Group. *Towards a Pacific Island Community: Report* (Wellington: The Group, 1990).



being of limited significance to New Zealand, accounting for barely 3 percent of her trade."<sup>1</sup>

This, like so much else in recent discussions about region, points to the role of economic links and interests in constructing 'the region' which, while not invalid in itself, invokes different discourses of region to those which have heretofore constructed a 'South Pacific'. These discussions owe more to the debates about regional economic 'blocs'. The Australian APEC initiative of 1989 is one example of a perceived 'hijacking'<sup>2</sup> of 'the Pacific' by notions of Asia-Pacific regionalism. Crocombe has noted that at an organisational level the "technique of joining the islands to Asia is recent, as shown by the dates of formation of the organisation and of adding "the Pacific" to them - in most cases it is since 1975."<sup>3</sup> This re-naming has not, however, promoted much greater reference to the concerns of island states, and the recent Asia-Pacific initiatives do little to remedy this. As one regional diplomat has recently put it: "The apparent indifference to island countries' aspirations and needs, displayed by some proponents of new forms of Asian-Pacific co-operation will need to be overcome if the South Pacific is to be orderly, stable and secure."<sup>4</sup>

Another strand of contemporary region-making is driven by the idea of 'regional issues', particularly environmental and fishing issues. These are

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<sup>1</sup>Beaglehole, J. H. "Credibility through Partnership" *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter* Dec 1991/Jan 1992, p. 11. My discussion here has generally devoted less time to New Zealand than to Australia not because there is less interest there in the 'region', but because it has had less to do with the discourses of international order on which I have been focusing.

<sup>2</sup>Ihimaera, Witi. "The Long Dark Tea-time of the South: New Zealand's Search for a Pacific Identity" In *The South Pacific: Problems, Issues and Prospects*, ed. Ramesh Thakur (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, in association with the University of Otago, 1991), pp.133-144.

<sup>3</sup>Crocombe, R. G. "Regional Cooperation: Overcoming the Counter-pulls" In *Foreign Forces in Pacific Politics* ed. Ron Crocombe and Ahmed Ali (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1983), p. 192.

<sup>4</sup>Dihm, William. "Global Change and the South Pacific Forum States" In *The Security of Oceania in the 1990s: Vol. 1: Views from the Region*, ed. David Hegarty and Peter Polomka (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1989), p. 18.

influenced - in a very practical way - by the maritime characteristics of the region but are also influenced by discourses of the 'uniting seas.' Two regimes exemplify this approach to region-making and point to a regime-based understanding of region. The 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga, despite the compromises in its construction and the subsequent refusal of the US and France to sign, has constructed an environmental/political 'zone' (albeit not really nuclear-free) within which continued French testing and the U.S. chemical weapons disposal project on Johnston Atoll are seen as anomalies within a more general norm.

The 1982 Law of the Sea gave coastal states sovereign rights in their 200-mile economic zone "for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the living or non-living natural resources of the waters superjacent to the sea-bed, and of the sea-bed and its subsoil."<sup>1</sup> This 'ownership' has, however brought up issues of management and enforcement. "To illustrate the size of the problem, a small island with a 200-mile EEZ has jurisdiction over some 125,000 square miles of sea, though only a comparatively limited number of islands are so isolated as to have to cope with such a large sea area."<sup>2</sup> The Pacific Patrol Boat program and agreements to lease areas for outsiders' fishing are two solutions to date, although each of these may be seen to bring up its own problems of 'security', in terms of their reliance on 'outsiders.'<sup>3</sup> The fisheries issue has combined elements of economic cooperation with 'regional' management

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<sup>1</sup>Harden, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 81. The scope of the impact of the LoS is discussed in Barston, who notes that overall EEZs have enclosed "almost 90 percent of living resources of the sea within national jurisdiction." (Barston, Ronald "Law of the Sea: Issues and Practice" In *International Politics since 1945: Key Issues in the Making of the Modern World*, ed. Ronald Barston (Aldershot [UK]: Edward Elgar, 1991), p. 147).

<sup>3</sup>As Jervis has noted: "even if they agree about the objective situation, people can differ about how much security they desire - or, to put it more precisely, about the price they are willing to pay to gain increments of security." (Jervis, Robert. "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma" *World Politics* 30: 2 (Jan 1978), p. 174.



through the activities of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA).<sup>1</sup> It has been argued that the FFA has moved in some ways from regional cooperation to a 'pragmatic supranationalism'<sup>2</sup> in using its authority to manage the 'regional' resource.

Environment and resource management issues thus suggest the creation of 'regional' boundaries (encouraged by the existence and the use made of regimes) which draw on discourses of international order but are also framed in terms of 'We the Pacific.' This region-making 'protects' 'the region' in very practical as well as discursive ways. The practices through which these environmental/ecological regions are constructed, draw on and participate in discourses of what it means to be 'Pacific' ('Oceanic')<sup>3</sup> as well as its expression in terms of a 'South Pacific' political community.

The 'different regions for different occasions' which have been discussed in this section thus point to different regional boundary-making with their own resolutions of the identity/difference problematic. A recent discussion of the difficulties in getting the JCC (Pacific Islands Nations-United States Joint Commercial Commission) off the ground which refers to the difficulties of dealing with islands groupings may be read as one of dealing with 'different regions.'

"... Washington does not appear to have factored into its calculations the difficulties involved in launching with a multilateral group an initiative ideally more suited to a bilateral relationship. Compounding the difficulties, this particular group may have an acronym (FICs), but it does

<sup>1</sup>The Forum Fisheries Agency was established in 1979. Discussion of the issues raised by the LoS regime, and its application in the South Pacific owe much to the handling of the FFA.

<sup>2</sup>Herr points to the FFA's authority in certain matters as developing "supranationalism" - "as a pragmatic response to a discrete regional management need." (Herr, Richard A. "The Future of South Pacific Regionalism" In *The Pacific Islands in the Year 2000* ed. Robert C. Kiste and Richard A. Herr (Honolulu: Pacific Studies Program, Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Development Program, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1985), p. 84). He points to the the FFA's authority to set binding catch limits as an example.

<sup>3</sup>One may also see a drawing on Spate's notion of 'Oceanic' (see above) although ecology has supplanted 'communications' as the major interest.



not function alone in any natural multilateral context and has no acknowledged leader. All the FICs belong to the Forum, but so do Australia and New Zealand, two countries excluded from the initiative. The Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders couples all the Forum countries with Tokelau and the American and French territories. SPC and all the other regional groups have similar limitations."<sup>1</sup>

The Asia-Pacific regionalism developments suggesting a marginalisation of the South Pacific are occurring alongside a contrary vision of a South Pacific of greater interest to, and taken more seriously by, outsiders.<sup>2</sup> The interpretation of these sorts of developments, however, depends on an understanding of *what South Pacific* we are talking about.

### Conclusion

"Cultural actors make metaphors, but observers of culture make models. The one resolves the paradoxes of living - of determinancy and indeterminancy, of event and action, of given and made - by unifying them. The other resolves the paradoxes of understanding - of appearances and reality, of structure and form - by dividing them."<sup>3</sup>

Although my starting point for this essay has been the question of how to talk about 'regional security', my focus has been on the practices and discourses of region-making. If we accept the challenge to re-address the security question in terms of 'whose security' - as I think we must - it then becomes crucial to consider the identity-making practices which construct that 'who.'

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<sup>1</sup> "Bush Commercial Initiative Inches Forward" The Washington Pacific Report 10: 9 (February 1, 1992), p.2. I am obviously not suggesting that these 'limitations' are a problem to be solved.

<sup>2</sup> As seen e.g. in the reception given the Wellington Convention outlawing driftnet fishing.

<sup>3</sup> Denning, Greg. The Bounty: An Ethnographic History (Melbourne: History Department, University of Melbourne, 1988), p. 108.

The 'South Pacific' is something which has been *made* - it is a 'metaphor' for some understanding of the problematic of identity and difference. This is not to say that it has no geographical boundaries, but (apart from the fact that even these may vary) such boundary-making is only meaningful in terms of *what it is* that is 'inside' and 'outside.' This is because such boundary-making is also identity-making (or vice versa), and "the relational character of identity always raises the issue of how the self-constitution of identity is established through the constitution of differences."<sup>1</sup>

I have thus considered here the way in which discourses of 'Oceania' (including the 'Orientalist visions' of 'outsiders' and local identity-making strategies) have sited the region in terms of heritage and authentication, while discourses of international order have sited the region in terms of assumptions about the international political system. These post-WWII discourses and practices constructed a 'South Pacific' distinctive from the 'Pacific' of Pacific islanders, but which was nevertheless shaped by those discourses of 'Oceania'. This bounded South Pacific was re-interpreted in the experiences of decolonisation and nation-building, and an 'indigenist' region-making. Part of this was the assertion of a Pacific identity based on self-conscious 'authentication' practices, such as 'The Pacific Way.'

Walker's "whose security?" question as he quite rightly points out "calls into question our capacity to think coherently about security in the modern world at all."<sup>2</sup> It raises the question of how political community is possible and out of what relations of identity and difference it can be constructed.

I suggest that the traditional ways of discussing South Pacific regional security fail to examine the way in which security resides in the relationship between mutually constituting identity and difference. Both the notion of an internal security community and of a collective security against outsiders

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<sup>1</sup>Connolly, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup>Walker, R. B. J. *The Concept of Security and International Relations Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

rely on a view of region as a level of analysis whose boundaries are taken as a given. These boundaries are both geographical and hierarchical.<sup>1</sup> Since the most common 'given' is that of an aggregation of states in an international system of states, the notion of state security writ large tends to drive discussions of regional security. In this context it may be that 'region' is something that cannot be secured at all - that regional security is really about the aggregation of the security of certain states in geographical proximity. Or alternatively that 'regional' security is merely a gloss on the interests of one or more hegemonic states (most particularly Australia).

However the framework for analysis I have been suggesting here is that region-making as identity-making processes themselves suggest an on-going security relationship. That political/cultural communities are constituted as security communities. That *regional* security is in the relationship between regional identity and what is constituted as difference. This focus on region-making allows us to bypass the unexamined region characteristic of (or even required by?) conventional regional security discourses.

Region-making and nation-making (and other forms of cultural identity-making) have occurred together in identity-making practice and discourse. Thus, region is not a 'level, and if region is not a level, regional security cannot be a level of analysis with its own security dynamics.

If regional security is to have any meaning, it is necessary to look at how 'regional' boundaries are being constructed through identity-making - i.e. to look at how 'region/s' are being made. An examination of 'region' as a historical construction points to the usefulness of an 'invention of culture' <sup>2</sup> framework for interpreting 'regional security' - for the notion of regional

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<sup>1</sup>This notion of 'level' tends to combine a geographic sense (a larger contiguous unit) with the idea of its place in a hierarchy between state security and international security, i.e. level is relational in both a geographic and a political sense.

<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of this notion which has influenced many of those working in historical anthropology (or ethnographic history) noted here, see Wagner, Roy. The Invention of Culture, rev. and expanded ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).



security is meaningless except in connection with some understanding of regional identity.

There is a paradox here in the use of an unexamined concept like 'regional security'. Failing to say what is meant by region, makes not more room for 'difference' but instead produces a 'black box' suggesting a uniformity of assumptions.<sup>1</sup> If this essay has been prompted by any particular normative concern (and all writing must own to some), it is with the "cultivation of care for the ambiguous relations of identity\difference" within which security - including regional security - may be said to lie.<sup>2</sup> "The moment of difference is not necessarily something to be feared. . . . It is rather the necessary counterpoint to the moment of identity. The possibility that the future might just as easily involve greater pluralism, greater fragmentation, greater difference does not necessarily imply the impossibility of global community, or the other way around."<sup>3</sup> For 'the South Pacific', preserving a distinctive identity draws on discourses of region-making. The irony is that the undeconstructed region is more likely to be 'lost' because of a failure to appreciate that it has to be *that* region.

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<sup>1</sup>That is to say, it is similar to the way the 'state' is 'black-boxed' in much international relations theory.

<sup>2</sup>Connolly, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Walker, "Realism, Change, and International Political Theory" *op. cit.*, p. 83.

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